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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 3, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TIM HOLDEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Divine source of eternal light and everlasting life, we offer You praise and thanks for the blessings You give us as families and as a Nation. Forgive us our narrow-minded self-centeredness. With a vision of faith, help us to see the goodness around us. May we truly recognize the actual needs of our brothers and sisters in the human family and establish bonds of solidarity in the community of nations.

Deepen our belief in the religious sincerity of others, our belief in representative government and our belief in Your divine Providence. Show us how to strengthen our collaboration with others and manifest our true destiny as a Nation in world history. For You are our sovereign Lord now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CARNAHAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain requests for up to five 1-minute speeches on each side.

ECONOMIC DISASTER UNWINDS

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. The economic disaster continues to unwind. Of course, there was reckless lending, bad investment, cheating and, yes, bad borrowing. But the major failure was of this administration and Congress over the last 7 years. I commend Chairman FRANK for his understanding and resisting the rush to less regulation and oversight, while there was far more risk taken on in our economic system.

There is a seriously flawed Senate package moving its way forward. We must remember the people who need help the most, by reforming bankruptcy laws so that we do not favor the speculator over the homeowner. Above all, we must not reward the people who got us into this mess and profited overwhelmingly along the way. American people deserve better; not just the almost 8,000 per day facing foreclosure, but the tens of millions whose neighborhoods will be harmed as a result.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MASON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of the Mason County High School boys' basketball team. The Mason County Royals won the Kentucky State Boys' Basketball Championship on March 22, 2008, at Rupp Arena in Lexington.

The Mason County Royals defeated the Covington Holmes Bulldogs 57-48 in the championship game. Tournament MVP Darius Miller scored 19 of his game-high 24 points in the second half of the championship, to lead the Royals to victory. This year marked the 12th time in 28 years that the Mason County Royals advanced to the Sweet Sixteen Tournament and the second time the team has won the Kentucky State Championship. The young men on this team are not only championship-caliber players, by but all accounts, students and leaders who are a credit to their community.

Finally, I want to congratulate the coaches and fans who support the team. Coach Chris O'Hern guided the Royals to victory. The team also received tremendous community support, evidenced by 17,000 fans that traveled to Lexington to attend the game.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in congratulating the achievement of the Mason County Royals on their State championship. It's an honor to represent this team in the United States Congress.

FARM BILL CONFERENCE

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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H1975

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, get this. The Secretary of Agriculture has publicly stated that he is not enthusiastic about increasing spending for nutrition programs above the \$9.5 billion currently being discussed as part of the farm bill conference. I have news for the Secretary. Families going to food banks aren't enthusiastic about their struggles. People applying for food stamps aren't enthusiastic about the tough choices they are forced to make because their food stamp benefit isn't keeping up with the price of milk. Seniors aren't enthusiastic about having to take their medicines on an empty stomach.

The Secretary should get out more into the real world and meet with some of these families. \$9.5 billion is simply not enough, not when families are choosing between food and heat; not when the minimum food stamp benefit is still \$10 a month, unchanged since 1977; not when the price of milk eats more of the food stamp dollar today, than last year, simply because food stamps aren't indexed for inflation.

The farm bill conferees should do the right thing and properly fund the nutrition title. Anything less is shameful.

PARDON BORDER AGENTS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Constitution gives the President absolute authority to grant a pardon. He has exercised that power 157 times. Last week, he pardoned 15 more people convicted of everything from importation of drugs to bank fraud and other crimes.

But two people not on his pardon list are Border Agents Ramos and Compean, who are serving 11 and 12 years for enforcing the law on the Texas-Mexico border. They were convicted of civil rights violations when they shot a drug smuggler bringing in \$750,000 worth of drugs to the United States.

The United States Government gave the drug dealer complete immunity for his crimes to testify against the agents. Then the Justice Department hid from the jury the fact that the drug dealers smuggled in another load of drugs shortly before the trial. The U.S. Attorney made a backroom deal with the smuggler for his testimony and got the tainted testimony they bartered for.

Last session, this House passed legislation to prevent taxpayer money from being used to incarcerate Ramos and Compean, but they are still in prison. Because of the U.S. Attorney's actions of deception in this trial, and the fact that the agents were just doing their job, are grounds for the President to pardon both of the border agents immediately.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING PFC ANDREW HABSIEGER

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Private First Class Andrew Habsieger, who died serving our country in Iraq. On Easter Sunday, March 23, he was one of four soldiers killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad. He was scheduled to return home to his family in 2 weeks. Andy was just 22 years old.

In Festus, Missouri, friends and family remembered him as a loving child and standout high school football player. Andy proudly served the U.S. Army as an infantryman and was inspired to fight for his country after the terrible attacks of September 11.

On March 22, 2005, Andy wrote me requesting assistance in joining the Marine Corps because of experiencing migraines while growing up. Andy ultimately joined the Army. Looking back on his letter, I am reminded of his steely determination to serve his country. That he did.

The weekend Andy died marked the 4,000th American soldier killed in Iraq. My heart goes out to Andy's parents, Michael and Brenda Habsieger, as well as his brother, Jacob, who is also in the Army. We must never forget our Nation's fallen heroes. PFC Andrew Habsieger will not be forgotten and his service will inspire generations yet to come.

THE COOPER-WOLF SAFE COMMISSION ACT: BIPARTISANSHIP REQUIRED

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, last week the annual Medicare trustees report concluded that consideration of reforms to ensure the financial security of Medicare must occur in the near future. The report states, "The sooner the solutions are enacted, the more flexible and gradual they can be." As lawmakers, we are obligated, on economic and moral grounds, to tackle this enormous issue.

Newspaper headlines in the days following the release of the report say as follows, "Should political stalemate end, entitlement solution possible"; "Entitlement reform cannot wait on politics"; "Budget experts left and right urge action on entitlements."

Every day that the Congress doesn't act, nor the administration, we miss an opportunity for our children and our grandchildren to get this country moving. Congressman COOPER and I have a bill called the SAFE Commission. It's a bipartisan bill.

I am also, Mr. Speaker, disappointed that Secretary Paulson has failed to address this issue. He said he feels like

he is playing solitaire. Secretary Paulson, there are 74 cosponsors in the House, 40 Republicans, 34 Democrats that are waiting for you to do something. Secretary Paulson, if you leave this administration with failing to do that, you will regret it.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

REPORT FROM THE FEDERAL RESERVE

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, was before us at the Joint Economic Committee. Chairman Bernanke noted many negative factors for the current economy, increased unemployment claims, increased food and energy prices, and it has reduced Americans' confidence in the economy.

Recently, we have all seen news reports about the Federal Reserve's unprecedented actions aimed at increasing liquidity, stabilizing credit markets, and protecting a Wall Street investment bank from bankruptcy. Despite these dramatic measures, liquidity remains limited, and with only news reports to go on, the American public seems unsure about whether government is acting in their best interest.

The Federal Reserve needs to start clearly informing the American public about the impact of its actions. This openness would encourage sensible economic policy, bring stability to the markets, and help restore individuals' confidence in the government and in our economy.

Millions of homeowners are struggling to make mortgage payments or have already lost their homes, and they do not feel like their government is helping them. The Federal Reserve needs to clearly communicate better to the American people.

OBAMA

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, in a recent speech in my home State of Pennsylvania, one of the candidates for President referred to the possibility of his daughter conceiving a child as a "punishment." In referring to his own two daughters, he said, "I am going to teach them first about values and morals, but if they make a mistake, I don't want them punished with a baby. I

don't want them punished with an STD."

I agree that teens should be taught about values and morals. But I find it disturbing that any candidate for high office finds the notion of a grandchild to be punishment, a punishment on the same level as a sexually transmitted disease. Have we come this far? Has the opposing party embraced an ideology that is so opposed to life that a grandchild is seen as a punishment?

In the same speech he said, "This is an example where good people can disagree." Well, I see nothing good about believing a grandchild is a punishment. Not his most eloquent or uniting speech.

□ 1015

CONGRATULATING NICKELODEON AND THE WOLFF-DRAPER FAMILY

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, during Read Across America Week, I went to Lincoln Elementary School in Memphis, Tennessee, and we read our favorite book, "Green Eggs and Ham." I asked the young people if they ever watched C-SPAN, and they looked at me quizzically. Then I asked them if they ever watched Nickelodeon, and they all raised their hand and cheered. I said, "Which show do you watch the most?" They watch "The Naked Brothers Band."

The Naked Brothers Band is a show on Nickelodeon that has been an award winner starring Nat and Alex Wolff, produced by their mother, Polly Draper, and co-produced by their father, Michael Wolff. It is the "Ozzie and Harriet," the Nelson brothers of the 21st century, and it shows that there is good television that gives kids good values and teaches them about the environment and how to be good young people and grow up to be great Americans.

So my congratulations to the Nickelodeon Network and to the Wolff-Draper family and Nat and Alex.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4847, UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1071 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1071

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All

points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science and Technology. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Science and Technology now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration in the House of H.R. 4847 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Ohio is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. SUTTON. For the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Ms. SUTTON. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 1071 provides for consideration of H.R. 4847, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008 under a structured rule. The rule provides 1 hour of de-

bate, controlled by the Committee on Science and Technology, and makes in order all three amendments that were submitted for consideration. I am proud to rise today in support of this rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, twenty-seven years ago, in 1971, over 12,000 citizens and more than 250 firefighters tragically lost their lives due to fires. In response to those tragic occurrences, this body passed the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act into law, establishing the United States Fire Administration, also known as the USFA, and the National Fire Academy, known as the NFA. The USFA was created to reduce the incidence of death, injury and property loss from fire through public education, data collection, research and training.

Mr. Speaker, we have made great progress. Since the creation of the USFA in 1974, the number of fire deaths has been reduced by more than one-half. Besides providing training and educational programs for over 30,000 fire departments across this great Nation, the USFA promotes fire safety and prevention programs to the public.

Mr. Speaker, these educational and outreach programs undoubtedly have saved thousands of lives and thousands of dollars, and will continue to do so.

Reports published by the USFA provide essential information to help reduce the risk of fires. For example, the USFA releases a report in December to encourage fire safety during the holiday season. According to last year's report, "Fires occurring during the holiday season claimed the lives of over 400 people, injured more than 1,650, and caused \$990 million in damage." The report outlines precautionary tests to help American families avoid devastating but often preventable accidents.

The USFA also collects reliable data on civilian and firefighter deaths and injuries. In 2006, there were 3,245 civilian deaths from fires and 81 percent of all civilian fire deaths occurred in residences, which represents 25 percent of all fires. Direct property loss due to fires was approximately \$11.3 billion, \$755 million of which was the result of 31,000 intentionally-set structure fires.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, 106 firefighters were killed in the line of duty in 2006. For nearly 30 years, the USFA has collected data on the number and causes of firefighter fatalities. The analysis of this invaluable research allows the USFA to find solutions to specific problems and reduce the number of fatalities with our firefighters.

While the number of firefighter deaths has been greatly reduced, approximately 100 brave firefighters make the ultimate sacrifice to protect our loved ones and our communities each year. We must continue to strive to prevent fires, to learn the lessons from unpreventable fires, and to properly train and equip our firefighters. It is vital that our Federal Government ensure that our brave firefighters have

the training and the support they need to keep our families and communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, this reauthorization bill will promote national consensus standards for safe fire fighting at all levels of Government. H.R. 4847 will also help to provide training for firefighters who are increasingly called on to handle modern-day challenges and catastrophes, including fire fighting in the wildland-urban interface and responding to hazardous material incidents.

Firefighters are the first on the scene and the last to leave. Captain Robert Livingston echoed these sentiments in his testimony before the House Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation when he said, "The days of firefighters whose primary function was to 'put the wet stuff on the red stuff' are long gone. The men and women of the 21st century fire service have evolved into highly-trained, highly-skilled all-purpose emergency responders with broad responsibilities."

Firefighters in my district know this all too well. With the recent and reoccurring damaging floods in cities like Barberton, North Royalton, Elyria and Lorain, our firefighters have been called upon to provide emergency flood assistance. And we must never forget, Mr. Speaker, the heroics our Nation witnessed on September 11th as these brave men and women ran into the Twin Towers to save as many people as possible. Three hundred forty-one of New York City's finest firefighters, three fire safety directors, two paramedics and one volunteer firefighter died in the line of duty at the World Trade Center on that fatal day.

It is our responsibility to provide the resources necessary to train those who protect us, and today, with passage of this act, we will be providing the support to meet the needs of our firefighters for the 21st century. By reauthorizing and improving this act, we are ensuring that the USFA continues to provide training, education and the tools to the firefighters we entrust to protect our communities and our families.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Ohio, Ms. SUTTON, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, in 2003, this legislation, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act, passed the U.S. Senate by unanimous consent, and it passed the House that same year as a suspension bill by a voice vote. This year it was approved with bipartisan support and a voice vote out of the House Science Committee. The history of this bill has clearly been one of bipartisanship and broad agreement on

the merits for renewing the U.S. Fire Administration activities.

Mr. Speaker, it is a prime candidate for consideration as a suspension bill by this House, and in a Tuesday meeting of the Rules Committee, I suggested that if no amendments were filed with the committee, that the House should actually consider it as a suspension bill because of its broad support.

The Democrats on the Rules Committee said no to consideration as a suspension, as was done in 2003, which, I might add, was done with their consent in 2003. The Democrat Rules Committee insisted on a structured amendment process requiring Representatives to file their proposed amendments through the Rules Committee for the committee's review. Ultimately three amendments were filed with the committee. This rule would make only those three amendments in order, thereby prohibiting the 432 other Members of the House from coming to the House floor and offering an amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the Democrat majority has set an historic record for the most closed rules in the history of the House. In doing so, they shut down debate on the House floor more than any other majority has.

Mr. Speaker, it is really a terrible record. As the new Democrat majority took control after the November 2006 elections, they promised the exact opposite. They pledged to run the most open House and to allow for bipartisan ship.

Mr. Speaker, they have broken that promise. Other than appropriation bills, which are historically considered under open rules, this Congress has had only one, just one open rule, and that was over a year ago, in February of 2007.

Mr. Speaker, this bill to renew the activities of the Fire Administration is noncontroversial. If it is not going to be considered under suspension of the rules, then it should be done under an open rule. If this noncontroversial bill is not a candidate for an open rule, then what bill will this Democrat majority be willing to bring to the floor and allow under an open rule?

The Democrat majority blocks debates on controversial bills and noncontroversial bills. No legislation appears safe from their drive to shut down and shut out debate in this House. They promised to run the House in an open manner, and they are not. They passed new rules to make conference committees more open. Then they just stopped using conference committees and retreated further behind closed doors to write final bills. Mr. Speaker, as just one example, take the Democrat refusal to conference with the Senate on FISA legislation.

The American people were promised that this House would be run differently, that it would be run better, but in fact it has not been. The Democrat majority has exceeded and sur-

passed the heavy-handed tactics that they condemned in the last Congress. Now they have gone so far as to take a noncontroversial bill that was passed by voice vote and turn it into another opportunity to tighten the vise and block debate on the House floor.

□ 1030

This House deserves to be allowed to work in an open and free manner, and it hasn't had that, Mr. Speaker.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to, if I could, just mention this bill. The bill has such wide support, not only within this Congress, but it has been endorsed by some extraordinarily important organizations out there. It has been endorsed by the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the International Fire Service Training Association, the National Fire Protection Association, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the North American Fire Training Directors. So this bill has wide support and on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I would just make the observation: This bill, as I mentioned in my remarks and as the gentlelady from Ohio mentioned in her remarks, has obviously very, very broad bipartisan support. Why not consider it then under an open process? There are probably many Members that have an idea that they could perfect this legislation, but we are being denied, with the exception of three amendments, to try to perfect this bill.

I just think it is the wrong way to go in a body that prides itself being open to debate and being very deliberative. We are certainly not getting that opportunity under this noncontroversial bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, we have heard on this floor today why we must pass this rule and pass the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act.

As I have said, we must continue to support firefighters in communities like Sheffield Lake, Brunswick, and Akron, and all across this Nation, and ensure that they have the resources available to do their job to protect our loved ones and our communities.

This bill authorizes appropriations for the fiscal year 2009-2012 for the USFA in the responsible manner the American people expect of Congress. According to the Congressional Budget Office, enacting this legislation will not affect direct spending or revenues, and will impose no costs on State, local, or tribal governments.

H.R. 4847 expands the list of training activities the National Fire Academy is authorized to engage in, which will

help our firefighters manage the demands of the 21st century. These programs include response activities to all types of national catastrophes; exposure of hazardous materials; and increased emergency medical services. This bill also authorizes the USFA to assist the Nation's fire services by improving equipment and sharing best practices to address fire suppression and prevention.

This bill was passed by a voice vote by the Science and Technology Committee with bipartisan support, and has been endorsed by the International Association of Firefighters.

I urge a "yes" vote on the previous question and on the rule.

I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 4847, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1071 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4847.

□ 1041

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes, with Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MITCHELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 4847, the U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization

Act of 2008, a bill I introduced with the original cosponsor, my good friend from Georgia, Dr. GINGREY.

Firefighters are often the first to arrive at an emergency scene and the last to leave. Whether it is putting out a house fire or a wild fire, or responding to a terrorist attack or car accident, we depend on firefighters every day. But firefighters also depend on us; they depend on the public and their elected officials to make sure that they have the resources, the equipment, and the training they need to do their job. Without those tools, we put them and all of us at risk.

The U.S. Fire Administration is an invaluable resource for our Nation's firefighters and the communities they protect. Through training, data collection, fire education for the public, and support for fire-related research and development, the USFA provides critical tools and leadership to the Fire Service.

Fire is one of nature's most destructive forces. In 1973, when USFA was created, over 6,000 Americans died each year in fires and another 100,000 were injured. Through the leadership of USFA and others, the number of people killed by fires each year is now between 3,000 and 3,500, with approximately 16,000 people who were injured. We can all be proud of the significant reduction. However, 3,000 Americans a year is still too many, especially when so many of these deaths and injuries are from our most vulnerable populations, children and the elderly.

In addition, the Nation still suffers over \$11 billion per year in direct losses due to fire, and the trend for this number is going up, not down. With statistics like these, it is clear that fire continues to be a major problem for the U.S. H.R. 4847 reauthorizes this important agency for 4 years at funding levels that will enable USFA to carry out fully its mission.

□ 1045

At a hearing with the Technology and Innovation Subcommittee held last fall, we heard the priorities of the Nation's fire service communities for USFA. This bill directly reflects their priorities.

This bill authorizes the USFA to focus on the pressing challenges of fighting fires in the wildland-urban interface, and fires involving hazardous materials, as well as advanced topics of emergency medical services.

Back home in Arizona, one of the toughest challenges our firefighters face is wildfires in the wildland-urban interface. This is an important year for wildfires. We have had a pretty wet winter which means a great deal of shrubs and bushes have grown at lower elevations. When the summer months heat up and the vegetation dries out, those shrubs and bushes will turn into tinder that can start a fast-moving wildfire in urban areas. Those fires threaten homes and lives. Fighting wildfires in urban areas requires spe-

cial training, and I am proud that this legislation enhances fire administration training for wildland-urban interface fires.

Firefighters today are called upon to respond to an ever-broader range of emergencies. This authorization bill gives USFA the authority to make sure its training program keeps pace with the increasing challenges to the fire service.

The bill also addresses an important priority of the fire service in USFA, and that is to update the National Fire Incident Reporting System, or NFIRS. This system provides important data on fire events to policymakers at all levels of government. The current system is slow to report the data to the National Fire Data Center, and does not capture data on every fire, thus limiting its value to users. H.R. 4847 would direct USFA to update NFIRS to a real-time reporting, web-based system.

The bill also directs the U.S. Fire Administrator to continue USFA's leadership in firefighter health and safety. Every year over 100 firefighters die in the line of duty. H.R. 4847 directs USFA to educate local fire departments about national voluntary consensus standards for firefighter health and safety, and to encourage local departments to adopt these standards. This provision will help reduce the tragic loss of life the fire service suffers each year in line-of-duty deaths by promoting good practices in a variety of fire emergencies.

I also understand there have been some concerns that this provision would affect the jurisdiction of NIOSH, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. I would like to reassure my colleagues that it is not my intent for this bill to have any effect on NIOSH or any other agency of the Department of Health and Human Services.

H.R. 4847 is the product of bipartisan collaboration, and is supported by major fire service organizations, including the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, National Fire Protection Association, and the Congressional Fire Services Institute.

The resources and leadership of the USFA are an essential part of the ability of the fire service to protect our cities, towns and communities. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 4847, the U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008 reauthorizes USFA's activities in training, fire education and awareness, data collection, research and standards development and promotion. This legislation also authorizes \$291 million in Federal funds for fiscal years 2009

through 2012 for the USFA. This authorization level, Mr. Chairman, is consistent with previously authorized levels and it only includes a very modest growth in funding that is capped at 3 percent in any of the fiscal years for the bill.

Mr. Chairman, as the lead Republican sponsor of this legislation, I am pleased to have worked with my colleague from Arizona, Mr. MITCHELL, over these past few months to bring this bill, H.R. 4847, to the House floor today.

I am also pleased that this bill has gone through the regular order process. That is a refreshing phrase, Mr. Chairman, but I am certainly pleased that it went through regular order. In fact, in October, the Science Committee's Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation, of which I am the ranking member, we held a hearing on reauthorizing USFA, and H.R. 4847 was unanimously reported out of our subcommittee earlier this year.

On February 27 of this year, the full committee, the full Science Committee, reported the bill after accepting both Republican and Democratic amendments that I think have improved the bill.

The mission of USFA is to limit economic and life loss "due to fire and related emergencies, through leadership, advocacy, coordination and support."

This organization provides vital assistance in the areas of training, fire education and awareness, and it awards grants to a number of our local fire departments across this country. We all have them in every district of all 435 Members. These activities have made a substantial impact over the last 30 years.

Mr. Chairman, it is important to note that because of the work of the USFA, smoke alarms are now standard issue in residences across the country. Over a million firefighters have received advanced training, and firefighter equipment and safety continually improves.

USFA should be proud of its record of achievement. However, it is also clear that certainly there are still improvements that can be made. In the last 10 years, deaths related to fires have decreased by approximately 25 percent, from nearly 5,000 in 1996 to 3,675 in 2006. Although that decrease in fire-related deaths is commendable, the United States still has one of the highest death rates from fires in the industrialized world.

Additionally, despite decreases in the numbers of fires, direct damage costs are increasing and have surpassed \$10 billion per year. The number of fires have gone down, but the damage from them has gone up to \$10 billion per year. In an average year, Mr. Chairman, fires caused as much damage in the United States as have hurricanes. The reauthorization of USFA will allow the agency to continue to improve our preparedness and to reduce our vulnerability to fires.

Unfortunately, last year we saw wildfires that literally ravaged south-

ern California, and we need to develop a more cohesive way of combating these fires. I am happy to see that this legislation specifically addresses the issue of fighting fires in what we refer to as an urban-wildland interface by implementing methods to better respond and prepare for fires that move from wildlands to suburban and indeed urban areas.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, I am particularly pleased that this legislation now includes an amendment that I offered at full committee. It will allow the USFA administrator to perform studies related to the management of emergency medical services at the scene of a fire. Our brave firefighters, men and women, are called upon to extract victims from car crashes, building fires or collapses, and other emergencies, so it is critical that patients receive consistent care under medical direction.

While I do not expect USFA to pursue studies into the medical care EMS patients should receive, I believe my amendment, which was accepted by the full Science Committee, will give the administrator the authority to conduct studies into training, system design, on-scene patient management while making sure to work with appropriate Federal agencies and existing medical services in these local communities.

Mr. Chairman, the current bill is an important and well-crafted step forward for the USFA, and it represents months of diligent work by both the majority and the minority members and staff of the Science Committee. I want to make sure to commend the great staff of both the minority and the majority.

This legislation has been a bipartisan accomplishment of our committee. That is pretty much standard practice in the Science Committee, I am proud to say, Mr. Chairman. And it is being supported not only unanimously by the committee, but by a number of fire-related advocacy groups, including the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the International Fire Service Training Association, the National Fire Protection Association, the National Volunteer Fire Council, and the National North American Fire Training Directors.

Mr. Chairman, I could go on, but my staff didn't list any more.

I certainly want to say, Mr. Chairman, this is an outstanding bill and I urge all my colleagues to support it, H.R. 4847, because this bill will enable the USFA to continue its record of achievement, as well as prepare firefighters for the challenges that they will undoubtedly face in the future.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON), the chairman

of the Science and Technology Committee.

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, I thank Mr. MITCHELL for yielding to me, and I want to thank him for the introduction of this important and outstanding piece of legislation.

As my friend Dr. GINGREY said, this is a bipartisan piece of legislation coming out of what I hope is thought of as a bipartisan committee. I want to thank him, as well as Mr. WU, for their work as the subcommittee chairman and ranking member. I want to thank Mr. HALL for his help in getting this bill out as the ranking member of the committee.

We have passed more than 30 bills and resolutions out of the Science and Technology Committee, all of which have been bipartisan, and all but one have been unanimous. This is another one of those unanimous bills. I think that happens because we are working together to try to do it the right way. We had a good subcommittee hearing. We had a subcommittee markup, a full committee markup. When you do it that way, you get the type of third-party endorsements that Dr. GINGREY talked about.

We have the endorsement of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the National Fire Protection Association, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the National North American Training Directors, the International Fire Service Training Association, and the Congressional Fire Service Institute. That is quite a lineup to demonstrate the support for this good bill.

I also want to thank the members of the committee for their work as this bill was crafted. Ms. RICHARDSON was particularly helpful in bringing her experience of firefighting from a coastal area, and made us realize that a curriculum in marine and port firefighting was important.

This is a good bill done the right way, and I thank all parties for their participation.

Mr. Chairman, at this time I would like to place into the RECORD an exchange of letters between the Committee on Science and Technology and the Committee on Homeland Security.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, March 28, 2008.

Hon. BART GORDON,
Chairman, Committee on Science and Technology,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GORDON: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 4847, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2007. Though H.R. 4847 implicates the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security, I will not seek a sequential referral of this bill because I share your interest in assuring that this legislation is brought to the House floor in an expeditious manner. Agreeing to waive consideration of the bill should not be construed as the Committee on Homeland Security waiving its jurisdiction.

Further, the Committee on Homeland Security while forgoing a sequential referral of

this bill, reserves the right to seek the appointment of conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this or similar legislation. I ask for your commitment to support any request by the Committee on Homeland Security for the appointment of conferees on H.R. 4847 or similar legislation.

In addition, I ask that you please include this letter and a copy of your response acknowledging the Committee on Homeland Security's jurisdictional interest in this bill and indicating your support of our agreement in the committee report on H.R. 4847 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY,
March 28, 2008.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding the consideration of H.R. 4847, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008. I appreciate your willingness to forgo a sequential referral on this measure so that it may move expeditiously to the Floor.

While the Committee on Science and Technology has been given sole jurisdiction over every U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) bill since the USFA's creation, we recognize that the Committee on Homeland Security has an interest in H.R. 4847 based on your jurisdiction over functions of the Department of Homeland Security relating to research and development (House Rule X(1)(i)(3)(E)). Research, development, and demonstration programs and projects at the Department of Homeland Security remain within the shared jurisdiction of the Committee on Science and Technology due to our jurisdiction over "scientific research, development, and demonstration, and projects, therefor" (House Rule X(1)(o)(14)). I acknowledge that by forgoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Homeland Security does not waive its jurisdiction. In addition, I will support any request you may make to have conferees to a conference committee on those sections of H.R. 4847, or any similar legislation.

The exchange of letters between our two committees will be inserted in the legislative report on H.R. 4847 and the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

BART GORDON,
Chairman.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve my time.

□ 1100

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield 3 minutes to Mr. PASCRELL, the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, to all of those on both sides of the aisle who made it possible for the reauthorization bill to come to the floor today, I say thank you, and all the services.

The U.S. Fire Administration, through FEMA, provides the leadership, the coordination, and support services for fire prevention and control, which is critical. I mean, we still lose

100 firefighters, on average, every year. That certainly is unacceptable to any of us on this floor. And we need to work even harder to make sure that our firefighters have the resources and the wherewithal to do the job we ask them to do.

If you remember the Fire Act we passed before 9/11, this was a response to the very basic needs of the 32,000 fire departments throughout the United States and the one million firefighters. That legislation broke ground because it was a response to needs that we've neglected. We can't expect that every local community in this country has the resources to supply and provide the training and the state-of-the-art equipment to the fire departments throughout America, and so that Fire Act has been so successful.

There is literally \$3.5 billion in applications in the Fire Act, and a tremendous amount of applications for SAFER every year. And we have devised, both of us, on both sides of the aisle, probably the best format of how to judge the competitive applications. We've asked the firefighters to step up to the plate, judged by their peers. But the Fire Administration is partner with all of these peer firefighters who review the applications. In the Fire Act and SAFER bill, this is very unusual, the money goes directly to the departments so that the States cannot skim and the local government cannot skim. So, this is a real competition, and I believe that's how all Federal funds should be used. That's my own personal opinion.

The Fire Administration has been a true partner for 34 years. The roles and responsibilities of the fire service have evolved for the 1.1 million men and women in fire and emergency services, over 316,000 career firefighters, almost 317,000, and the 824,000 volunteers.

What I am so thankful for, in terms of the U.S. Fire Administration, Mr. Chairman, is that the U.S. Fire Administration has brought the volunteers and the career firefighters together. This is invaluable.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from New Jersey has expired.

Mr. MITCHELL. I yield an additional minute to the gentleman.

Mr. PASCRELL. I cannot express how important this is. All the competition that existed before 2000, we've gotten out of it, and thanks to the Fire Administration. They are working together, the career firefighters and the volunteer firefighters.

This is a very important legislation that is going to save lives. And isn't this what we're here for, to do what we can on a Federal level, realizing it's always going to be the local efforts that are going to be most important. But we have a responsibility, and it seems to me today, Mr. Chairman, that we're stepping up to the plate.

I want to commend Members on both sides, the good doctor and my good friend from the Southwest part of the

country. This has brought us together, this legislation, and it is good legislation.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I will continue to reserve my time.

Mr. Chairman, may I ask how much time is remaining on both sides?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Arizona, his time remaining is 18 minutes. The gentleman from Georgia, his time remaining is 22 minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield as much time as she may consume to Ms. RICHARDSON, the gentlelady from California.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support today of H.R. 4847, which is the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act.

This reauthorization of this vital legislation demonstrates Congress' commitment to enhance the protection of our citizens throughout this great Nation to prevent any harm that might come to loss of life or property due to devastation caused by fires. Included in this legislation is an amendment that I offered at a full committee markup that I'd like to reiterate and clarify at this time.

Inclusive in H.R. 4847 is an amendment that does not create a new standalone course regarding port and marine firefighting. In fact, much effort was taken by my staff, the Republican side, committee staff, as well as the various agencies, to ensure that we would take conscious action in not creating additional costs for the agencies and/or programs that are right now really not funded to the levels we would like to see.

The intent of the amendment is to take the unique content of port and marine firefighting activity and to incorporate that information into existing classes. Why, you might ask? This Congress' goal of using, in an efficient manner, resources that we have, we also want to integrate information to best prepare our firefighters to respond to disasters.

And you might ask the question, why? In the United States alone, we have over 126 shipping ports, all of which are critical to the movement of goods and the general health of our economy. The volatility of the products that are being shipped and the new increased size of these shipping vessels causes problems to our firefighters in terms of responding. So, when you consider a district such as mine that borders along the Port of Long Beach and also the Port of Los Angeles, one of the things that we learned in the wake of Katrina, we learned in the San Diego fires, and we also learned with September 11th is that firefighters are brothers and sisters. You might have rural firefighters who respond to an urban disaster; likewise, urban firefighters might be called to respond to a rural disaster.

And so, one of the things that we've learned in these incredible complex disasters that we've had over the last couple of years is that inoperability, the

ability for rural and urban firefighters to have the same information and to be prepared in the midst of a disaster because it's one thing to play Monday night quarterback when everything can be planned in advance, but when we have a disaster, it is too late at that point for our firefighters to be trained on how do you respond to an extended vessel, or how do you respond to an LNG disaster, or how do you respond to anything else that might be occurring. And so, with that, it is my pleasure to work with, we had great leadership by Mr. MITCHELL here in this effort of the reauthorization bill.

Because we never know what our firefighters might be facing, I, unfortunately, lost a firefighter in California just last week. So, I would be remiss at this moment not to thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Representative BARTLETT and Representative ROHRBACHER, for their support of this amendment.

I intend, through conference with staff and the appropriate members of the Department of Homeland Security, USFA, and the Superintendent of the Fire Academy to ensure that we have the right curriculum that can be incorporated that can benefit all firefighters to ultimately protect our citizens in a better way.

In closing, I want to again commend our colleague, Representative MITCHELL, for his leadership on this issue, and also Chairman GORDON for his commitment on the Science and Technology Committee to move beyond all of the limits and the challenges that we have, and to make sure that Americans are protected every day.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield as much time as he may consume to Mr. WU, the gentleman from Oregon. He is the chairman of the Technology and Innovation Subcommittee. And I want to thank Chairman WU for moving this bill so quickly through the subcommittee.

Mr. WU. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to recognize the leadership of the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL) for working diligently on this important piece of legislation, for reaching across the aisle and working with the gentleman from Georgia, and for his leadership in shaping this important piece of legislation. In fact, it was, indeed, through efforts like this that Congress first formed the United States Fire Administration in 1974 because of then reports that there are over 12,000 deaths each year in this country, and over 300,000 fire injuries. And through the hard work of the USFA, and others, we have been fortunate to see that number drop dramatically.

We are now a much safer Nation thanks to improved awareness of fire

safety practices, increased use of smoke detectors and sprinklers, and other fire safety measures. Still, about 3,000 people die each year of fires, and 10,000 more are injured. We also still see too many firefighters die in the line of duty. And I want to recognize Mr. PASCRELL, the gentleman from New Jersey, for his diligent work over many years to decrease that unconscionable number.

We have a lot more work to do. The USFA supports local fire departments in a variety of ways. It offers training and career development to thousands of mid-level firefighters, fire chiefs, and other emergency management officials.

USFA is a great way for the Federal Government to help coordinate efforts for local firefighters. USFA also develops fire education and awareness curriculum material to be used in training citizens across the country. It aims these messages at groups which suffer the highest fire casualties, such as the young and the elderly.

While Congress is working to reauthorize and build on this program, the President, unfortunately, is cutting the budget for USFA. Indeed, the President's fiscal '09 budget cuts USFA by more than 5 percent.

As firefighters learn to respond to new issues, such as fires and the wildland-urban interface, terrorist events and harmful materials incidents, we need to provide sufficient funds to train and prepare them for these situations.

Firefighters risk their lives every day so that they can protect ours. Passing this legislation is one way that we can not only show, but tangibly demonstrate our deep appreciation.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the underlying bill. I again recognize the leadership of the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL).

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, at this time, I am pleased to yield to the ranking member of the full committee, the Science Committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL). I yield to him as much time as he might consume.

Mr. HALL of Texas. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I won't take all that much time.

I've heard it said that water and fire are wonderful friends and fearful enemies, and I'm sure that's been said a lot of times today. And we know the terrible devastation that both of these can bring.

Thousands of people die in the United States every year due to fire, and many more are injured. The total would be even higher if it weren't for the dedication and the service of our Nation's fire men and women.

I don't know how you can say enough about our Nation's firefighters. I would say this: It's kind of a shame that it took a 9/11 for people to really fully appreciate firefighters and men and women that defend us and defend our property and our lives. I just think they're treasures of the country, and

it's good for this Congress to honor them every chance we get. And that's why I'm very pleased that the Committee on Science and Technology has taken the time to deliberate and produce a bill that will greatly contribute to the effectiveness of the United States Fire Administration, and by extension, the local men and women who serve us so very well.

I'd like to thank the gentlemen from Arizona and Georgia for their leadership on this bill, as well as the rest of the colleagues on the committee for their work. And I, of course, urge passage of H.R. 4847 and yield back the balance of my time after once again saying that it's unusual that it would take some kind of devastation like we had in our sister State over here to really bring the full appreciation of men and women who, day and night, face the fires and face protection of our property and our goods. I'm honored to be a part of recognizing them and saying to them one more time from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you, we appreciate what you're doing, and we look forward to the fact that you're going to be able to continue to do it.

□ 1115

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield as much time as he may consume to Mr. MATHESON, the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Chairman, once again the Science Committee brings to the House floor a bill that makes sense, that was developed in a bipartisan way. It's a great tradition of this committee, and I think Members on both sides of the aisle on that committee know what a great committee it is to work on.

And I want to thank Congressman MITCHELL, in particular, for taking the lead on this issue, because his approach really fits into the Science Committee approach about how we look at issues, and we try to work together in a bipartisan way to make progress. And that's why I'm happy to stand up and offer my support for this bill today.

In the grand scheme of things, one of the reasons why I think this is incredibly important is that the United States has one of the highest fire-related death rates among all industrialized nations. Think about that. With all the technology we have in this country, all the safety measures, we still rank so poorly among industrialized nations in terms of fire-related deaths. And this legislation takes a step in terms of trying to address that problem.

Now, I come from a western State, the State of Utah; and in the West, we have particular danger in terms of forest fires. This legislation fully funds the National Fire Incident Reporting System, which is going to help the U.S. Fire Administration prevent future forest fires. Currently, we're only able to capture data from 50 percent of wildfires, which just is not enough.

By improving the incident reporting system, the U.S. Fire Administration

will be able to speed up the reporting data, generating a more comprehensive database. In practical terms, that's going to mean better analysis, greater fire prevention, and fewer lives lost.

And, in particular, this bill, if enacted, will expand the program to include training in wildland-urban interface areas. And this is an issue that's particularly important in western States where, as population growth has taken place, there has been greater development of housing that's moved more into where the forest exists; and that's a critical problem during these wildfire incidents is how we deal with fire issues in that very sensitive area.

Most of my congressional district faces this problem, and my congressional district is not unusual compared to most of the West. I believe better training in terms of this wildland-urban interface will be a huge asset to Fire Departments in similar areas.

So Mr. Chairman, I want to again thank you for your leadership on this issue. I thank Chairman GORDON and ranking member HALL. I thank Chairman WU from the subcommittee. I thank Congressman MITCHELL for his leadership. I know Mr. GINGREY's been a leader on this issue as well. And again, the Science Committee, as usual, comes up with a bill that makes sense. I'm sure it will be adopted today, and I urge all my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, if I might ask my good friend from Arizona how much time, first of all, does he have left, and does he have additional speakers.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Arizona, the time remaining for him is 8 minutes. And the gentleman from Georgia, the balance of time remaining for him is 20½ minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you. We have some additional speakers that are on their way.

Mr. GINGREY. At this point, Mr. Chairman, I will continue to reserve the balance of my time. But if the gentleman needs some time from our side, we will be glad to yield it to him.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, we do have a couple more speakers. They are on their way.

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I appreciate the good words that people have come and said before this body. We've made significant strides in reducing fire-related deaths and injuries since Congress first created this agency in the 1970s. But again, as we've noted, and all the speakers have noted, there are still more than 3,000 Americans that die every year from fires, and many more injured. And despite the decreases in the number of fires, the cost, as we said, is continually rising. And, in fact, it's roughly the same cost, the damage of fires is roughly the same cost as caused by hurricanes.

We know that the Fire Service provides critical assistance in protecting our communities from emergency events. From house fires to terrorist

events to natural disasters, firefighters, as we've noted, are not only the first on the scene, but many times the last to leave.

As the wildfires in California last fall demonstrated, the Fire Service plays a vital role in protecting our communities, and that's why we introduced H.R. 4847, to reauthorize the U.S. Fire Administration and provide additional resources for our Nation's firefighters.

The U.S. Fire Administration is an invaluable resource for over 1.3 million firefighters and emergency personnel around the country. Through training, educational materials, data collection and other services, the USFA provides tools and leadership to firefighters and communities that they serve.

H.R. 4847 will reauthorize the USFA, funding its critical work until the Fiscal Year 2012. This bill will ensure that our firefighters are trained to handle modern-day challenges facing today's first responders, including, as we have mentioned before, firefighting in the wildland-urban interface and responding to hazardous material incidents.

The bill is supported by, and we've listed a whole list of these before, all of these national associations that deal with firefighting.

This bill is the product of bipartisan collaboration and had considerable input from the Fire Service community.

We encourage you to help support firefighters in your district by ensuring that everyone has the resources they need by supporting this important legislation.

I would reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I will yield to myself such time as I might consume.

I was recently in Iraq. I've been a number of times, of course, to Iraq, and Afghanistan. And also just recently, I saw a news special back home highlighting one of our great heroes from the Middle East who was burned severely. His injuries, I think, were the result of an improvised explosive device, and he was an occupant of one of the up-armored HUMVEES or the new MRAP vehicles. I think, indeed, it was an up-armored HUMVEE.

And while he was not injured by shrapnel or a projectile, there was a fire, and there was a significant fire. And of course, as he was pulled from the burning vehicle, he sustained severe, severe injuries to his person from the fire. And he described how he just, he knew what to do. He rolled, he tried everything in his power. But of course, thanks to what happened to him at Landstuhl Medical Center in Germany, and then eventually at Walter Reed and Bethesda, he's alive and well and has a family and children. And this little news clip featured him playing with his kids. But you could certainly see the ravages that that fire inflicted upon his body, and the scarring of course. What a brave—I wish I could remember his name, Mr. Chairman, be-

cause it was, talk about a profile in courage.

But it just made me think about, as we've been discussing here today, and you talk about what these firefighters do and how important they are. And actually, as we know, 40 percent of the workload in Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom has been carried by our Guard and Reserve, many of whom are firefighters who, you know, they've been trained. And thank God for that. And I'm very hopeful. I want to look into this further. I'm sure that our military, our regular Army and Marine Corps, they're all well-trained in that. But that just goes to show you how important it is, not just to save a life, but try to bring that life back and so they can rejoin their family and friends in society, go back to their job.

One of the statistics that I think both Mr. MITCHELL and I mentioned in regard to the fact that the latest year that we had numbers, there was still something like 37,380 people that lose their lives every year in fires in this country.

Well, you know what? That's about the number, we're at 4,000 now, that have lost their lives in this 4½, 5-year war. And of course there were practically 3,000 lives lost, many of them from fire, a lot of them firefighters themselves, on 9/11. So it just brings home the message that fire is an awful thing. It is an awful thing. It might not kill you immediately, like one of these high powered projectiles, but it can certainly destroy one's life.

And so what we're talking about here today is so important, and that's why this bill is so important.

I just wanted to make those remarks, Mr. Chairman.

I, at this time, don't have additional speakers waiting for time, but I would like to reserve the balance of my time. And I still make the offer to yield to the gentleman from Arizona if he needs some more minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I would, again, like to yield as much time as he may consume to Mr. WU, the gentleman from Oregon, who is the chairman of the Technology and Innovation Subcommittee. I, again, want to thank him for all the efforts he's put into this bill.

Mr. WU. Mr. Chairman, again, I would like to recognize the leadership of the gentleman from Arizona for working so hard on this important legislation, this legislation which was developed in regular order in both subcommittee and full committee.

The gentleman from Georgia, my ranking member, we held hearings last October at the subcommittee level, and then we had a full committee markup, and the bill was drafted in full consultation with both majority and minority members and majority and minority staff.

Much has been made of the work that will be done on the wildland-urban interface and the fuel loads and the biomass loads there, and the hazardous

materials, and that is very, very important.

I also want to draw attention to the sections of the bill that directs the USFA to educate local fire departments about voluntary consensus standards for firefighters health and safety. And many fire groups, especially the National Association of Firefighters, very strongly believe that adherence to these standards can help reduce the number of firefighters who die each year in the line of duty.

□ 1130

This bill has been endorsed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the National Fire Protection Association, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the North American Fire Training Directors, the International Fire Service Training Association, and the Congressional Fire Services Institute; and I would like to specifically thank all of the firefighters from home in Oregon who helped me with this legislation in shaping it and bringing it to this point on the House floor.

And with that, I would again like to commend the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL) for his leadership on this important legislation.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I will continue to reserve my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. I would like to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MILLER).

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Thank you, Mr. MITCHELL. I will not consume much.

I do want to applaud the work of the Science and Technology Committee on reauthorizing this program that has been remarkably effective.

Fire is remarkably destructive, but we have made great strides under this program. In 1973, there were more than 6,000 Americans who died each year in fires, another hundred thousand were injured. Largely because of this program and the training and other support, we are now about to the point where about 16,000 a year are injured and between 3,000 and 3,500 die each year. That is obviously still too much, but is remarkable progress.

And among the most dangerous work that anyone can do is fighting fires. The number of deaths each year among firefighters is a large number, and even more are injured every year. A great many firefighters never complete their term of service before qualifying for retirement because they suffer from disabling injuries.

This bill does provide for additional training for fighting fires, particularly where wild areas come into contact or where urban areas and wildland areas meet. It helps training for fires that involve hazardous materials as well as giving advance training in emergency medical services. And it does, as Mr. WU just pointed out a moment ago,

provide for moving towards a voluntary consensus for firefighters' health and safety.

This will help reduce that number of firefighters who die each year and who suffer from grievous injuries in doing very courageous work in protecting us and protecting our property.

Mr. MITCHELL. I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON).

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair will remind the gentleman from Arizona he has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, I would rise today in strong support of the underlying bill which reauthorizes one of the most effective agencies in the Department of Homeland Security. H.R. 4847 provides \$70 million annually to the Fire Administration through 2012 to ensure long-term funding stability for this critical agency.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. MITCHELL, and the chairman of the Science and Technology Committee, Mr. GORDON, for their leadership on this issue and for working with me to bring this legislation to the floor today.

Mr. Chairman, the statistics are sobering. Every year, over 100 firefighters die in the line of duty. In 2005, the National Fire Protection Association reported 3,675 civilian deaths, nearly 18,000 civilian fire injuries, and over \$10 billion in direct losses due to fire. The United States Fire Administration plays a critical leadership role in leading local fire departments to dramatically reduce these numbers.

Mr. Chairman, I, along with all of the other speakers who have come before you in support of this legislation, encourage its passage.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I will continue to reserve.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, we have no further speakers.

Mr. GINGREY. How much time do we have, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. At this point in time, the gentleman from Arizona's time has totally expired. The time remaining for the gentleman from Georgia is 16½ minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. I would be happy, Mr. Chairman, if the Chair would allow, to yield up to 5 minutes for the gentleman from Arizona to close. But I want to make my closing remarks, of course, before that.

The CHAIRMAN. After the gentleman from Georgia concludes his remarks, he may then yield time to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GINGREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To close on my side, again, let me just simply say as I did before, it has been a great pleasure to work with Mr. MITCHELL on this bill. It has been an even greater pleasure to meet with the many firefighters and fire chiefs who I have consulted with over the past few months: our own fire chiefs in my

county and city, Cobb County, Georgia; Marietta City, Georgia; Chief Jackie Gibbs, Chief Becky Dillenger. I see them literally every week in the district and the great work that they do, and it makes me awfully proud to be up here representing not only them but the other eight counties in my district. They know that we are fighting to help them protect us, and that's a comforting feeling.

H.R. 4847 is a very good bill. And this is the least that we, in this body, can do to support our Nation's fire services. And I want to again say I hope that we will have as many Members that are present today, close to 430, I hope, voting "yes" for 4847 to support this bill.

At this time, I am prepared to yield as much time as the gentleman from Arizona needs for the purpose of his closing.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And first, I would like to thank Mr. GINGREY and all of his staff for the support they've given this important piece of legislation. And it's the least we can do, here in Congress, to provide the resources necessary for our first responders to react, the education that's involved, the training, particularly in areas that are very important, like in Arizona and California where there is a wildfire/urban interface.

As I said earlier, we have had a very wet winter in Arizona. It's good and bad. It brings out the wild flowers; it brings out a lot of green. But at the same time, in the lower elevations it brings out a lot of dry tender which just really is very dangerous this time of year.

So I would like to thank everyone, the staffs on both sides, the committee chairman, the subcommittee chairman, everyone who dealt with this particular issue.

And I, again, want to thank all of the firefighters, the professional people who are involved, who gave us what they felt is necessary to move this bill forward and to give them the tools that they need.

This piece of legislation will last until 2012. At that time, of course, we will have more input. Hopefully, we won't have as many disasters or types of disasters, but there will be new things that we need to learn and train for.

So I appreciate, again, everyone's efforts in this, and I know that the people around this country who are protected by these first responders also appreciate what we are doing for them today.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of House Report 110-563. That amendment in the

nature of a substitute shall be considered read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The loss of life due to fire has dropped significantly over the last 25 years in the United States. However, the United States still has one of the highest fire death rates in the industrialized world. For 2006, the National Fire Protection Association reported 3,245 civilian fire deaths, 17,925 civilian fire injuries, and \$11,307,000,000 in direct losses due to fire.

(2) Every year, over 100 firefighters die in the line of duty. The United States Fire Administration should continue its leadership to help local fire agencies dramatically reduce these fatalities.

(3) Members of the fire service community should continue to work together to further the promotion of national voluntary consensus standards that increase firefighter safety.

(4) The United States Fire Administration provides crucial support to the Nation’s 30,300 fire departments through training, data collection, fire awareness and education, and other activities for improving fire prevention, control, and suppression technologies.

(5) The collection of data on fire and other emergency incidents is a vital tool both for policy makers and emergency responders to identify and develop responses to emerging hazards. Improving the United States Fire Administration’s data collection capabilities is essential for accurately tracking and responding to the magnitude and nature of the Nation’s fire problem.

(6) The research and development performed by the Federal Government and non-government organizations on fire technologies, techniques, and tools advance the capabilities of the Nation’s fire service to prevent and suppress fires.

(7) The United States Fire Administration is one of the strongest voices representing the Nation’s fire service within the Federal Government, and, as such, it should have a prominent place within the Federal Government.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION.

Section 17(g)(1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2216(g)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding after subparagraph (D) the following new subparagraphs:

“(E) \$70,000,000 for fiscal year 2009;

“(F) \$72,100,000 for fiscal year 2010;

“(G) \$74,263,000 for fiscal year 2011; and

“(H) \$76,490,890 for fiscal year 2012.”.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY TRAINING PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS AND REPORTS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO FIRE ACADEMY TRAINING.—Section 7(d)(1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2206(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (H), by striking “terrorist-caused national catastrophes” and inserting “national catastrophes”;

(2) in subparagraph (K), by striking “forest” and inserting “wildland”;

(3) in subparagraph (M), by striking “response tactics and” and inserting “response, tactics, and”;

(4) by redesignating subparagraphs (I) through (N) as subparagraphs (M) through (R), respectively; and

(5) by inserting after subparagraph (H) the following new subparagraphs:

“(I) response, tactics, and strategies for fighting large-scale fires or multiple fires in a general area that cross jurisdictional boundaries;

“(J) response, tactics, and strategies for fighting fires occurring at the wildland-urban interface;

“(K) response, tactics, and strategies for fighting fires involving hazardous materials;

“(L) advanced emergency medical services training;”.

(b) TRIENNIAL REPORTS.—Section 7 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2206) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(m) TRIENNIAL REPORT.—In the first annual report filed pursuant to section 16 for which the deadline for filing is after the expiration of the 18-month period that begins on the date of the enactment of the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008, and in every third annual report thereafter, the Administrator shall include information about changes made to the Academy curriculum, including—

“(1) the basis for such changes, including a review of the incorporation of lessons learned by emergency response personnel after significant emergency events and emergency preparedness exercises performed under the National Exercise Program; and

“(2) the desired training outcome of all such changes.”.

(c) AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS TO PROVIDE ON-SITE TRAINING THROUGH CERTAIN ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS.—Section 7(f) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2206(f)) is amended to read as follows:

“(f) ASSISTANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator is authorized to provide assistance to State and local fire service training programs through grants, contracts, or otherwise.

“(2) AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS TO PROVIDE ON-SITE TRAINING THROUGH CERTAIN ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator is authorized to enter into a contract with one or more nationally recognized organizations that have established on-site training programs that prepare fire service personnel to meet national voluntary consensus standards for fire service personnel and that facilitate the delivery of the education and training programs outlined in subsection (d)(1) directly to fire service personnel.

“(B) RESTRICTIONS.—The Administrator shall not enter into a contract with such organization unless such organization—

“(i) provides training that leads to certification by a program accredited by a nationally recognized accreditation organization; or

“(ii) at the time the Administrator enters into the contract, provides training under such a program under a cooperative agreement with a Federal agency.

“(3) RESTRICTION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The amounts expended by the Administrator to carry out this subsection in any fiscal year shall not exceed 4 percent of the amount authorized to be appropriated in such fiscal year pursuant to section 17 of this Act.”.

(d) INCIDENT COMMAND TRAINING COURSE FOR FIRES AT PORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration, in consultation with the Superintendent of the National

Academy for Fire Prevention and Control, shall consolidate and integrate into the current Academy curriculum a course on incident command training for fire service personnel for fighting fires at United States ports and in marine environments, including fires on the water and aboard vessels. Such course shall not relate to border and port security.

SEC. 5. NATIONAL FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM UPGRADES.

(a) INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM DATABASE.—Section 9 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2208) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) NATIONAL FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM UPDATE.—Of the amounts made available pursuant to subparagraphs (E), (F), and (G) of section 17(g)(1), the Administrator shall use no more than an aggregate amount of \$5,000,000 during the 3-year period consisting of fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011 to carry out activities necessary to update the National Fire Incident Reporting system to an Internet-based, real-time incident reporting database, including capital investment, contractor engagement, and user education.”.

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 9(b)(2) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2208(b)(2)) is amended by striking “assist State,” and inserting “assist Federal, State,”.

SEC. 6. FIRE TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE AND DISSEMINATION.

(a) ASSISTANCE TO FIRE SERVICES FOR FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—Section 8(d) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2207(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking “RURAL ASSISTANCE” in the heading and inserting “RURAL AND WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE ASSISTANCE”;

(2) by striking “The Administrator” and inserting “(1) The Administrator”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) The Administrator is authorized to assist the Nation’s fire services, directly or through contracts, grants, or other forms of assistance, for activities and equipment to improve fire prevention and control in the wildland-urban interface.”.

(b) DISSEMINATION.—Section 8 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2207) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) DISSEMINATION.—Beginning 1 year after the date of the enactment of the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008, the Administrator, in collaboration with the relevant departments and agencies of the Federal Government, shall make available to the public information regarding United States Fire Administration funded activities to advance new knowledge and best practices in firefighting, through a regularly updated Internet database.”.

SEC. 7. ENCOURAGING ADOPTION OF STANDARDS FOR FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY.

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 37. ENCOURAGING ADOPTION OF STANDARDS FOR FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY.

“The Administrator shall promote adoption by fire services of national voluntary consensus standards for firefighter health and safety, including such standards for firefighter operations, training, staffing, and fitness, by educating fire services about such standards, encouraging the adoption at all levels of government of such standards, and making recommendations on other ways in which the Federal government can promote the adoption of such standards by fire services.”.

SEC. 8. COORDINATION REGARDING FIRE SERVICE-BASED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 21(e) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2218(e)) is amended to read as follows:

“(e) COORDINATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent practicable, the Administrator shall utilize existing programs, data, information, and facilities already available in other Federal Government departments and agencies and, where appropriate, existing research organizations, centers, and universities.

“(2) COORDINATION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAMS.—The Administrator shall provide liaison at an appropriate organizational level to assure coordination of the Administrator's activities with State and local government agencies, departments, bureaus, or offices concerned with any matter related to programs of fire prevention and control with private and other Federal organizations and offices so concerned.

“(3) COORDINATION OF FIRE SERVICE-BASED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROGRAMS.—The Administrator shall provide liaison at an appropriate organizational level to assure coordination of the Administrator's activities with State and local government agencies, departments, bureaus, or offices concerned with programs related to emergency medical services provided by fire service-based systems with private and other Federal organizations and offices so concerned.”.

(b) FIRE SERVICE-BASED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BEST PRACTICES.—Section 8(c) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2207(c)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (4) as paragraphs (3) through (5), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

“(2) The Administrator is authorized to conduct, directly or through contracts or grants, studies of the operations and management aspects of fire service-based emergency medical services and coordination between emergency medical services and fire services. Such studies may include the optimum protocols for on-scene care, the allocation of resources, and the training requirements for fire service-based emergency medical services.”.

SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.

Section 4 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2203) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking “Administration” and inserting “Administration, who is the Assistant Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency”;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(3) in paragraph (8), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”;

(4) by redesignating paragraphs (6), (7), and (8) as paragraphs (7), (8), and (9), respectively;

(5) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph:

“(6) ‘hazardous materials’ has the meaning given such term in section 5102(2) of title 49, United States Code;”;

(6) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(10) ‘wildland-urban interface’ has the meaning given such term in section 101(16) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511(16)).”.

The CHAIRMAN. No amendment to that amendment shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member des-

ignated in the report, shall be considered read, debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. PASCRELL

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part B of House Report 110-563.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Part B amendment No. 1 offered by Mr. PASCRELL:

Page 3, strike lines 23 through 25 and insert the following new paragraph:

(1) by amending subparagraph (H) to read as follows:

“(H) response, tactics, and strategies for dealing with national catastrophes, including terrorist-caused national catastrophes and incidents that involve weapons of mass destruction;”;

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1071, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, in the reauthorization act of 2008, this amendment provides that the National Fire Academy training program could train fire service personnel in response tactics and strategies for dealing with natural catastrophes, including terrorist-caused national catastrophes and incidents that involve weapons of mass destruction.

I want to thank the cosponsor of the underlying bill, Representative HARRY MITCHELL from Arizona, for presenting a very strong piece of legislation that will reauthorize the United States Fire Administration for another 5 years.

I also want to thank the chairman of the Science Committee, Congressman GORDON, for his leadership in considering all of the necessary elements of this legislation with the end result being a strong, comprehensive bill.

The underlying bill would authorize \$293 million through fiscal year 2012 for the U.S. Fire Administration, which is a vital agency charged with reducing debt and economic losses because of fire emergencies. I want to make clear that this is a small price to pay when considering the thousands of lives we lose each year to fire emergencies and the billions of dollars we spend to fight them.

Throughout my years in Congress, I have always been passionate for funding our Nation's fire departments and firefighters, the Fire and Safety grants that this Congress has provided in the funds supplied through this reauthorization. I feel especially strong about this reauthorization because it also includes provisions that help guide the fire academy on how to best train our

Nation's firefighters for the added and the increased challenges they face every day. My amendment addresses this issue by simply updating the training program at the National Fire Academy to include national catastrophes related to terrorism.

We saw on 9/11 our Nation's heroic firefighters were among the first responders on the scene trying desperately to rescue as many people as possible in that horrific act of terror. Clearly, we all understand that the responsibilities of our Nation's firefighters became greater on that day as they now have to train for emergency response to catastrophic terrorist attacks, including the foreboding threats of incidents involving weapons of mass destruction. Many of these types of courses already exist at the fire academy, but the future of these critical courses for these firefighters should never be put in doubt and need to be codified.

My amendment simply puts these practices into law and sends a message to the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Fire Administration that this issue continues to be important to the Congress and the protection of our constituents.

I thank the sponsor, Mr. MITCHELL, the chairman, Mr. GORDON, once again for all of their work.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time under the rule but I am in support of the gentleman's amendment, not in opposition to it.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

□ 1145

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, the men and women of our Nation's fire services are among the very first responders to an extraordinary wide range of accidents, injuries, and disasters. And the gentleman from New Jersey, he knows as well as anybody in this body. He was right there. His district's right there, very close to the scene of 9/11. And I think that his amendment is very, very appropriate because this was a fire caused by a terrorist attack. Unlike the Murrah Building attack at Oklahoma City, which was an incidence of domestic violence by our own, if you will, homegrown terrorists, this situation that occurred on 9/11 is the reason why I'm sure the gentleman from New Jersey has brought forth this good amendment. And he is so right to point out that firefighters will also be the first to the scene when many of these catastrophes happen.

Hopefully, it won't occur in this country again. We've been blessed. I think there has been a lot of hard work on the part of this Congress and this administration to protect our country on our soil from another terrorist attack. Thank God so far it hasn't happened. But that doesn't mean you don't

train for and prepare for it. And those firefighters that went to work that day, they were well trained, but I'm sure they weren't expecting a terrorist attack. And in such an event like that, their first job, of course, always is to heroically save lives. But fire services will also act to minimize the damage and property loss that a terrorist strike or ensuing events may cause. I mean, as the amendment addresses, there may be biological weapons of mass destruction, and there could have been, right behind the two planes, maybe another plane with a terrorist coming into the city in parachutes with nuclear or biological weapons, a sarin gas attack. God knows what could have happened in the subways of New York City. So the United States Fire Administration works hand-in-glove with other components of the Department of Homeland Security, and Chairman THOMPSON is here on the floor right now, to ensure that our Nation's fire services have access to the best training and resources available.

So I'm proud of the U.S. Fire Administration's work to date to improve our resiliency and our preparedness, yes, for terrorist events, natural disasters, and, of course, the daily accidents and fires that occur in communities across the country.

Mr. Chairman, I wholeheartedly support the gentleman's amendment. I urge all my colleagues and expect all my colleagues to support his amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair will remind the gentleman from New Jersey that he has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank my friend from Georgia.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL).

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I also want to say thank you to Mr. GINGREY for his support of this amendment, which we know will make this a much stronger bill and a better bill.

So I thank you very much for the amendment and all the support that it's receiving.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, it now gives me a tremendous sense of honor to introduce also the gentleman from Mississippi, my good friend, who is also the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee. No one, no one has worked harder to bring all of the agencies together in this effort to protect our country and to protect our families and our neighborhoods.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield the balance of my time to Chairman THOMPSON.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, today I rise in support of the amendment offered by my good friend, a member of the Committee on Homeland Security, Mr. PASCRELL. The gentleman from Paterson, New Jersey, is a leader on the committee and in Congress on first responder issues.

As a former volunteer firefighter and graduate of the Mississippi Fire Academy, I understand that many firefighters are unable to travel to the National Fire Academy's campus in Maryland to partake in training. The Fire Academy recognizes this need. By harnessing technology, the Fire Academy partners with existing local and State training academies to reach more first responders.

The Pascrell amendment addresses one key area of training: terrorism response training. Specifically, the amendment seeks to ensure that fire service personnel get training on response tactics and strategies for dealing with "terrorist-caused national catastrophes and incidents that involve weapons of mass destruction." Such incidents can be very complex and require response from many public safety agencies across multiple jurisdictions.

Today, the Fire Academy has a terrorism curriculum in place. The Pascrell amendment will ensure this continuation.

It has been nearly 7 years since the attacks of 9/11, and, thankfully, we have not been attacked since. However, Mr. Chairman, the threat is still very real. As Members of Congress, it's our collective responsibility to ensure that responders in our communities are fully trained, equipped, and staffed to answer the question call.

Once again, I encourage my colleagues to support the Pascrell amendment as well as the underlying bill.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. SALI

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part B of House Report 110-563.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Part B amendment No. 2 offered by Mr. SALI:

Page 9, line 24, strike "section" and insert "sections".

Page 10, after line 11, insert the following:

"SEC. 38. TRAINING AGENCIES ON IMPORTANCE OF CLEARING BIOMASS IN WILDLAND AREAS TO PROMOTE FIREFIGHTER SAFETY.

"In collaboration with the relevant departments and agencies of the Federal Government, the Administrator shall develop and provide information and training to relevant departments and agencies of the Federal Government on the importance of clearing biomass in wildland areas of Federal lands to promote the safety of firefighters."

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1071, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SALI) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Idaho.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Chairman, firefighting is a high-risk, high-consequence activity, and the agencies that are involved in managing wildland-urban interface have always had strong firefighter safety and training programs. Firefighter safety is their highest priority. In fact, the 1995 Federal Fire Policy sets the order of priorities for wildland firefighters as, number one, public and firefighter safety; number two, protection of resources; number three, protection of property.

The safety, health, and welfare of firefighters and the general public are becoming increasingly linked to the decline in the health of forested ecosystems. The most effective means of reducing burgeoning fire suppression costs, protecting community values, restoring forest and grassland health, and improving firefighter safety is an aggressive fuel treatment program. How land managers apply the fuels reduction program will have the greatest impact on the safety of wildland firefighters.

Threats to human life are compounded by the fact that more and more people are living in homes near fire-prone forests, placing themselves and the firefighters who try to protect them at greater risk.

My amendment allows the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration to develop and distribute information on the importance of clearing biomass from Federal lands. This commonsense amendment requires USFA to work in consultation with other Federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM to ensure that USFA provides the best possible recommendation. As we come upon what many are predicting to be another deadly and costly fire season, this information will be as vital as ever. We must provide our Federal employees, who are the best in the world, all the tools they need to keep our communities and themselves safe from catastrophic wildfires.

The Federal hazardous fuels reduction program can be a very good thing for wildfire fighters. If it is done properly, the program can reduce the most extreme of the hazardous fuels and make the working environment for wildland firefighters much safer.

The Federal Government has invested millions of dollars in a hazardous fuels reduction program to mitigate the risks, costs, and consequences of wildfire across millions of acres of publicly owned wildlands. The knowledge gained as to relative effectiveness of different types of treatments and the overall effectiveness of those treatments will have much greater value for protecting and promoting firefighter safety when that information is shared. The United States Fire Administration should be an important vehicle for disseminating this information, and this amendment will help to make that a reality.

Mr. WU. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SALI. I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. WU. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Do I understand the gentleman's amendment is designed specifically to increase firefighter safety within the wildland-urban interface?

Mr. SALI. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. WU. I thank the gentleman. Do I further understand that the gentleman's amendment does not intend to expand the clearing of biomass beyond current force management practices outside of the wildland-urban interface?

Mr. SALI. Mr. Chairman, this is intended to promote sharing of information. It doesn't have anything actually to do with the actual clearing of the biomass. It just deals with the information that's gained, and it would be in the wildland-urban interface for the results of that fuels treatment.

Mr. WU. If the gentleman would yield.

Mr. SALI. I yield.

Mr. WU. So all that information or other things to be done would be focused on the wildland-urban interface?

Mr. SALI. That's the purpose of this amendment too.

Mr. WU. I thank the gentleman.

And if the gentleman would further yield, the language that has been traditionally used, it refers to "fuel load," and the gentleman's amendment, I believe, sometimes uses "biomass," and the gentleman has sometimes referred to fuel load.

Is the gentleman using "biomass" in this sense, in the traditional sense that "fuel load" has been used in similar legislation?

Mr. SALI. I believe that that is correct.

Mr. WU. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Does any Member seek time in opposition to the proposed amendment?

Mr. MITCHELL. Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

□ 1200

Mr. MITCHELL. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding, and the generosity of his time.

Mr. Chairman, in this decade, wildland fires have consumed 50 million acres in this country. While the term "wildland fires" brings to mind uninhabited areas in our Nation's parks, forests, and rural areas, wildland fires have done tremendous damage to urban and suburban development as well. I think that was the reason for the colloquy between Mr. WU from Oregon and Mr. SALI from Idaho.

Last fall, western States were hit particularly hard by wildland fires that

encroached into developed areas and destroyed homes, businesses, and livelihoods. The amendment offered by the gentleman from Idaho addresses that concern. The amendment allows the Administrator of the USFA to distribute information on the importance of clearing in these areas biomass materials from Federal lands, not out in the interior of a National Park. That was a point that was made in the colloquy.

The amendment requires USFA to work in consultation, of course, with other Federal agencies to ensure that USFA provides the best possible recommendations. Removing hazardous fuels, biomass materials, from Federal forests and lands will help to prevent, and more importantly, to limit these forest fires as they begin to encroach on urban areas. So if you leave these materials susceptible to forest fires, the consequences, as Mr. SALI pointed out, can be disastrous.

So, Mr. Chairman, I support wholeheartedly his amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. MITCHELL. I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SALI).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. LANGEVIN

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in part B of House Report 110-563.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Part B amendment No. 3 offered by Mr. LANGEVIN:

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 10. SUPPORTING THE ADOPTION OF FIRE SPRINKLERS.

Congress supports the recommendations of the United States Fire Administration regarding the adoption of fire sprinklers in commercial buildings and educational programs to raise awareness of the importance of installing fire sprinklers in residential buildings.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1071, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to introduce an amendment that highlights the critical importance of deploying fire sprinklers in all commercial buildings. My amendment encourages the installation of fire sprinklers in commercial buildings and supports educational programs about installing them in residential buildings as well.

Five years ago, a tragedy struck in my home State of Rhode Island when a fire tore through the Station Nightclub in West Warwick. It was certainly a terrible awakening for all of us about the importance of fire safety. That fire,

which killed 100 people and injured 200 more, could have been prevented, Mr. Chairman, if fire sprinklers had been installed throughout the building. Almost every Rhode Islander knows someone whose life was changed forever by that terrible night, and we all learned a very hard lesson on the importance of installing fire protection equipment in our homes, workplaces, our schools, and recreational buildings. I hope that with a renewed focus on installing fire sprinklers and other safety devices, that we can prevent a tragedy like the one in West Warwick from ever occurring again.

There is no question that fire sprinklers save lives. In fact, the National Fire Protection Association has no record of a fire killing more than two people in a public building equipped with a fully operational automatic fire sprinkler system.

So, to this end I have introduced a piece of legislation called the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act, H.R. 1742, which would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide an incentive to business owners for retrofitting existing buildings with lifesaving sprinklers. This legislation, which right now has 114 cosponsors, will reduce the tax depreciation time for retrofitting sprinklers in nonresidential real property from 39 years down to only 5. So a significant time reduction. Again, from 39 years down to only 5 years for this tax depreciation to take advantage of the retrofitting of sprinklers.

While it's clear that fire sprinklers save lives, Congress has to date not taken a position on the importance of this important technology. So I believe that it is critical that we lend our voice to this issue and hopefully save another community from ever experiencing the devastating losses that West Warwick did.

So while we may not always be able to prevent fires from occurring, we certainly can minimize the damage they cause and the lives that they take. My amendment that I am offering today is a sense of Congress, and takes us one step closer toward that goal.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I strongly support reauthorizing the United States Fire Administration, and I would like to commend Chairman GORDON for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor. This bill will allow the U.S. Fire Administration to continue to provide support services for fire prevention, firefighter training and education, and emergency medical services activities. I urge my colleagues to support my amendment as well, H.R. 4847.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim time in opposition. However, we are very supportive of the gentleman's amendment, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, millions of United States houses today contain smoke alarms. They have been credited with saving thousands of lives. Yet, smoke alarms can only warn the occupants of a fire. They cannot contain or extinguish a fire. Fire sprinkler systems provide the means to limit fire growth and therefore save lives and property. We already mentioned \$10 billion a year, I think, in property damage, 3,600 lives lost every year.

Studies by the USFA have shown that the installation of residential fire sprinkler systems could save thousands of lives and millions of dollars in property taxes. Bottom line. So together with their Federal partners, USFA has reported a potential 82 percent reduction in fire deaths if fire sprinklers, along with smoke alarms, were installed in all residential dwellings. With the cost of a home sprinkler system in new construction being estimated as low as \$1.50 a square foot, or as low as 1 percent of the total cost of the house, and of course, many insurance companies offering discounts up to 15 percent on houses that contain sprinkler systems, it is clear that the benefits in lives and property saved far outweigh the costs.

The amendment from the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) supports the efforts of the U.S. Fire Administration to improve the awareness of the effectiveness and availability of residential sprinkler systems.

Mr. Chairman, I wholeheartedly support the gentleman's amendment, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield back my time.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his supportive comments and look forward to working with him on passage of this amendment.

At this time, Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Mr. LANGEVIN for all of his critical work on this too often neglected issue of fire sprinklers. I applaud this amendment for encouraging the installation of fire sprinklers in all commercial buildings and supporting educational programs about installing them in residential buildings. A very critical issue here.

We must take every opportunity to promote the use of fire sprinklers, as the gentleman from Georgia just pointed out, which is why we introduced the Campus Fire Safety Legislation to require mandatory responses. Every university now, every college, every community college, whether it is a college building or a dormitory, any building connected to that university or institution has an obligation to tell the parents and the students what is their record on fire safety. No students should be sent to any university, any university or any college, unless their parents and they themselves know what the record is, if there are sprin-

klers installed, if there are smoke detectors installed. We lost three who were killed in the Seton Hall fire in New Jersey, 58 were injured. Since 2000, 108 people have died in campus fires. There are 20 campus-related fire deaths in the last 2 years.

Mr. Chairman, I want to bring the attention to everyone on this as part of the educational process. I want to thank the gentleman from Rhode Island for introducing this amendment. It makes sense, and I hope everybody will support it.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Rhode Island has expired.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR) having assumed the chair, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes, pursuant to House Resolution 1071, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted by the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment to the amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the question is on the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MRS. MC MORRIS RODGERS

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Yes, in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mrs. Morris Rodgers moves to recommit the bill H.R. 4847 to the Committee on Science and Technology with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Page 5, line 16, after the em dash, insert "(1)".

Page 5, line 23, strike "otherwise" and insert "otherwise, so long as the State or local

government in which such fire service training program operates provides that any firefighter or rescue personnel, entity, or organization, including a governmental or intergovernmental entity, providing inspection services or advice on a voluntary basis without expectation of compensation regarding proper installation, use, defects, or recalls of infant and child safety seats shall not be liable for any act or omission in connection with providing such services or advice that results in harm to an infant or child".

Page 7, after line 6, insert the following new paragraph:

(2) That portion of paragraph (1) added by the amendment made by this subsection that appears after "otherwise" shall take effect after the end of the 2-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act.

□ 1215

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Washington is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, the underlying bill importantly recognizes the role and sacrifices of firefighters. And, yes, it is our firefighters who often volunteer to help protect our greatest asset, our children, yet they face a growing threat of liability lawsuits related to the proper installation of car seats.

Each year, nearly 2,500 children under the age of 14 die in car accidents, and more than 200,000 are injured in motor vehicle accidents. In 2005, half of those who died were not restrained.

According to the National Institute of Highway Safety, children that are restrained in child seats have an 80 percent lower risk of fatal injury. The good news is that we are doing better as a country in using child seats and saving lives. This may have something to do with the fact that all 50 States and the District of Columbia now have child restraint laws on the books. Yet it is estimated that 25 percent of kids are still not restrained.

We are making great progress in ensuring child safety seats are used to protect our Nation's greatest asset. However, even though more children are using child safety seats, improper installation or improper use of a child safety seat can have the same fatal consequences. As a new mom, this is a scary reality, and, like many new parents, I fear that we haven't installed our child safety seat properly.

A recent study in six States on the misuse of child restraint systems concluded that nearly 75 percent of child seats had at least one critical misuse. In an effort to reduce the misuse of child safety seats, many fire departments send personnel to a 32-hour 4-day course on their proper installation and use. Once these personnel have been trained, they are able to provide inspection services or advice on a voluntary basis regarding the proper installation and use.

When my husband and I had Cole last year, we were advised to have a fire department ensure our seat was properly installed. But I have also heard the stories of people being denied by their local fire department due to liability concerns.

One example was in Eaton Rapids, where new parents, John and Carol Doyle, like many parents, were nervous about the new responsibility for the health and safety of their new baby, and it began with that first ride home from the hospital. They had a pretty good idea how to strap their rear-facing infant car seat into the back seat of their car, but they didn't like the idea of guessing. They sought help from the people at the local medical center, but those folks declined. "They were afraid that if they told us how to do it, then there would be a problem. We would sue them."

The medical staffers suggested that they seek help from the fire department, so on the way home from the hospital they stopped by the fire station. The woman wanted to help, but couldn't. "It is a liability issue," she said, referring the family to the local police. They called the police department, but the person they spoke to said again it is a liability thing.

This is an important service that can help save the life of a child. However, the fear is that some departments and communities may be unwilling to offer this life-saving service because of fear of liability.

The motion to recommit I offer today would help remedy the situation. It would protect fire departments that wish to offer this service to the public. The language requires States or local governments covered under the provisions of this bill to protect their properly-trained firefighters from liability and lawsuits when they offer inspection and advice regarding car seat use.

This motion to recommit gives States 2 years to provide protection for our firefighters. This service the firefighters are offering is too valuable to let it get bogged down by the threat of lawsuits. We should not allow trial lawyers to hijack the safety of our children.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, my mother grew up way out in the country, way, way out in the country, and when she was a young girl their house burned. The only things they saved were their lives and the clothes on their back. Today, 70 years later, whenever my mother hears a fire engine or sees a fire truck, she tells me that story about how her house burned, almost in a trance. It is a very traumatic experience when a family goes through something like this.

That is the reason that our committee worked in a bipartisan way to try to come forth with a very good bill that would help to save lives, save property and help our firefighters do a better job of hopefully shielding some other families from that trauma that my mother went through.

It is really unfortunate after all of that work that the gentlewoman would come forth with a mischievous amendment that has had no discussion. We don't know anything about is there a liability problem or not. We don't know whether or not this is going to affect States' own liability or whether this is going to preempt it.

The gentlewoman had an opportunity, if this is such an important issue, to both come before the committee and talk to us at the subcommittee level. But there was no discussion. She could have come to the subcommittee markup, where it passed unanimously. But there was no discussion. She could have come to the full committee markup, where again it passed out unanimously, but there was no effort. Or she could have gone to the Rules Committee and asked to have a rule and be allowed to submit the amendment so we could have a discussion, even here at this late date. But there was no effort.

Quite frankly, I think this is a game of "gotcha." It is an insult to the Democrats and Republicans on the Science Committee, who worked hard to put this good bill together. It is an insult to the firefighters, who are trying to do their job every day and who need these funds and training. It is an insult to all those individuals and organizations that endorsed this bill, like the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the National Fire Protection Association, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the North American Fire Training Directors, the International Fire Services Training Association, and the Congressional Fire Service Institute. They endorsed this bill because it is a good bill, a bill that will help firefighters do their job. It is very unfortunate that we are trying to play these games at the last moment.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend that we vote down this amendment that we know nothing about and that we move forward with this good bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of passage.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 205, nays 209, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 159]

YEAS—205

Aderholt	Fox	Myrick
Akin	Franks (AZ)	Neugebauer
Alexander	Frelinghuysen	Nunes
Altmire	Gallely	Pearce
Bachmann	Garrett (NJ)	Pence
Bachus	Gerlach	Peterson (PA)
Barrett (SC)	Gilchrest	Petri
Barrow	Gingrey	Pickering
Bartlett (MD)	Gohmert	Pitts
Barton (TX)	Goode	Platts
Biggart	Goodlatte	Poe
Bilbray	Graves	Porter
Bilirakis	Hall (TX)	Price (GA)
Bishop (UT)	Hastings (WA)	Pryce (OH)
Blackburn	Hayes	Putnam
Blunt	Heller	Radanovich
Boehner	Hensarling	Ramstad
Bonner	Herger	Regula
Bono Mack	Hobson	Rehberg
Boozman	Hoekstra	Reichert
Boustany	Hulshof	Renzi
Boyd (KS)	Hunter	Reynolds
Brady (TX)	Inglis (SC)	Rogers (AL)
Broun (GA)	Issa	Rogers (KY)
Brown (SC)	Johnson (IL)	Rogers (MI)
Brown-Waite,	Johnson, Sam	Rohrabacher
Ginny	Jones (NC)	Ros-Lehtinen
Buchanan	Jordan	Roskam
Burgess	Keller	Royce
Burton (IN)	King (IA)	Ryan (WI)
Buyer	King (NY)	Sali
Calvert	Kingston	Saxton
Camp (MI)	Kirk	Schmidt
Campbell (CA)	Kline (MN)	Sensenbrenner
Cannon	Kuhl (NY)	Sessions
Cantor	LaHood	Shadegg
Capito	Lamborn	Shays
Carney	Lampson	Shimkus
Carter	Latham	Shuster
Castle	LaTourrette	Simpson
Chabot	Latta	Smith (NE)
Coble	Lewis (CA)	Smith (NJ)
Cole (OK)	Lewis (KY)	Smith (TX)
Conaway	Linder	Souder
Crenshaw	LoBiondo	Space
Culberson	Lucas	Stearns
Davis (KY)	Lungren, Daniel	Sullivan
Davis, David	E.	Tancredito
Davis, Tom	Mack	Taylor
Deal (GA)	Mahoney (FL)	Terry
Dent	Manzullo	Thornberry
Diaz-Balart, L.	Marchant	Tiahrt
Diaz-Balart, M.	Marshall	Tiberi
Donnelly	McCarthy (CA)	Turner
Doolittle	McCauley (TX)	Upton
Drake	McCotter	Walberg
Dreier	McCrery	Walden (OR)
Duncan	McHenry	Walsh (NY)
Edwards	McHugh	Wamp
Ehlers	McIntyre	Weldon (FL)
Emerson	McKeon	Weller
English (PA)	McMorris	Westmoreland
Everett	Rodgers	Whitfield (KY)
Fallin	McNerney	Wilson (NM)
Feeney	Mica	Wilson (SC)
Ferguson	Miller (MI)	Wolf
Flake	Miller, Gary	Young (AK)
Forbes	Moran (KS)	Young (FL)
Fortenberry	Murphy, Tim	
Fossella	Musgrave	

NAYS—209

Abercrombie	Cardoza	Delahunt
Ackerman	Carnahan	DeLauro
Andrews	Carson	Dicks
Arcuri	Chandler	Dingell
Baca	Clarke	Doggett
Baird	Clay	Doyle
Baldwin	Cleaver	Ellison
Bean	Clyburn	Ellsworth
Becerra	Cohen	Emanuel
Berkley	Conyers	Engel
Berman	Cooper	Eshoo
Berry	Costa	Etheridge
Bishop (GA)	Costello	Farr
Bishop (NY)	Courtney	Fattah
Blumenauer	Cramer	Finer
Boren	Crowley	Foster
Boswell	Cuellar	Frank (MA)
Boyd (FL)	Cummings	Giffords
Brady (PA)	Davis (AL)	Gillibrand
Braley (IA)	Davis (CA)	Gonzalez
Brown, Corrine	Davis (IL)	Gordon
Butterfield	Davis, Lincoln	Green, Al
Capps	DeFazio	Green, Gene
Capuano	DeGette	Grijalva

Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee
(TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loeb sack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Matheson
Matsui

McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Oliver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda
T.
Sanchez, Loretta

Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Skeltan
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—16

Allen
Boucher
Castor
Cubin
Granger
Hooley

Jefferson
Klein (FL)
Knollenberg
Miller (FL)
Paul
Rangel

Rush
Sires
Wittman (VA)
Wynn

□ 1246

Messrs. GUTIERREZ, BERMAN, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Messrs. CROWLEY, LARSON of Connecticut, UDALL of Colorado, and Ms. SLAUGHTER changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Messrs. MICA, PRICE of Georgia, LEWIS of California, MCINTYRE, and KING of Iowa changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 412, nays 0, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 160]

YEAS—412

Abercrombie
Ackerman

Aderholt
Akin

Alexander
Altmire

Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyd (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite,
Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett

Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Ferguson
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foster
Fox
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee
(TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston

Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loeb sack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel
E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Oliver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy

Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda
T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz

Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Sha's
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shirkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Skeltan
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt

Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—18

Allen
Boehner
Boucher
Castor
Cubin
Granger

Hookey
Jefferson
Knollenberg
Miller (FL)
Paul
Pryce (OH)

Rangel
Rush
Sires
Velázquez
Wittman (VA)
Wynn

□ 1256

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 4312

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered to be the first sponsor of H.R. 4312, a bill originally introduced by Representative Baker of Louisiana, for the purposes of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

□ 1300

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I ask to address the House for one minute for the purpose of inquiring about next week's schedule.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the majority leader, for information about the schedule for next week.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the distinguished whip for yielding.

On Monday, the House is not in session. On Tuesday, the House will meet at 12:30 for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business, with votes postponed until 6:30 p.m.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business. On Friday, no votes are expected.

We will consider several bills under suspension of the rules, including several important public health bills, H.R. 2464, the Wakefield Act, and H.R. 1237, the Cytology Proficiency Improvement Act. The final list of bills under suspension of the rules will be announced by the close of business tomorrow.

In addition, we will consider H.R. 2016, the National Landscape Conservation System Act, and H.R. 2537, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act relating to beach monitoring.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that.

I have a couple of questions on things that we haven't discussed. First of all, the supplemental budget, I know General Petraeus is in Washington next week, and I believe Ambassador Crocker. The President sent up a supplemental request in February of last year. By approximately June of this year we're told that the Army will run out of money, and that by July, their ability to use transfer authority will be exhausted. I wonder at what point, in conjunction with or following the Petraeus visits next week, does the leader think we will be talking about that supplemental request.

And I yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

It's our expectation that, following the testimony of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, the committees will be meeting to not only discuss substantive policy, but also to discuss the supplemental appropriation bill. It would be my expectation that that bill would be on the floor either the end of April or the first week in May. We are cognizant, as the gentleman indicated, of the June period, and so we want to move this significantly before that debate so that there will not be any lag.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that. I think that date is important, and we need to be sure and be aware of it as we move through this process, as you are.

The spending bill, I know as this administration comes to an end, I'm confident that the White House has had lots of requests from the administration side for additional spending, which I believe they have held the line on. Does the gentleman have a sense of whether this bill will be able to be contained to the defense supplemental, or will it possibly get bigger than that?

And I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Well, there are obviously needs in addition to Iraq that are being discussed, and I would tell my friend that those

discussions are ongoing. A decision on what may or may not be added in addition to the supplemental that may be necessary for Iraq, there may be other things, that decision has not been made at this point in time. But I do want to let the gentleman know that that is under discussion.

As the gentleman will recall, last year, when we passed the supplemental, there were domestic priorities that were also addressed, in particular, Katrina, as the gentleman will recall, and some other matters as well. So, that's under discussion.

Mr. BLUNT. Well, I do appreciate that. And I just say for my friend's information that we've certainly discouraged the White House, we're hoping, not only discouraged them from moving forward with any new additions, and I think they have decided not to do that and will be concerned about this going as quickly as possible and meeting these defense needs rather than being tied down.

Another topic is housing. On the other side of the building they've been talking about housing this week. I know that Chairman FRANK has some proposals on housing. I really have two questions there: One, when do you anticipate some housing legislation on the floor? And two would be, do you expect that that housing legislation will follow the PAYGO rules of this Congress, or will those rules be suspended for that housing discussion?

And I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. As you know, we are strong proponents of the PAYGO rule and have adhered to that in all but one instance last year. We did not adhere to it, as you know, with the stimulus package. There was concern, and obviously we didn't want to stimulate and depress at the same point in time, so that was under discussion. But I will tell you on the housing bill itself, Mr. FRANK has been working on that with his committee, MAXINE WATERS and others, and with Mr. BACHUS and others on the committee. And we would certainly hope to move a housing bill in the near term, certainly no later than the latter part of this month or the very first days of the next month, so that we can pass a bill that would give relief to those who have either been foreclosed upon or are on the brink of foreclosure. We believe that it is essential for us to try to address what is a national problem and a very serious one. And so, that will also go into the consideration, I think, of how much money is needed, how that will be paid for.

Mr. BLUNT. I think in that time frame there is a chance there will be some administrative actions taken as well, and that may be an important part of that debate.

I do know that this week Mr. Bernanke testified before the Joint Economic Committee, and part of his testimony was that he thought that this would be the wrong time for any tax increases. And I would hope we

could maintain some openness on that PAYGO discussion as it relates to this housing concern that people are facing.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much for yielding.

I will say that over the last 7 years, the President has told us things are pretty good. There was never a right time for revenues to be increased. Even in the times when the President was telling us the economy was robust, we were growing, we still weren't paying our bills.

We feel very strongly on this side of the aisle, and Mr. Bernanke, in a telephone conversation with me, said one of the things we didn't want to do, when you and I and Mr. BOEHNER and Ms. PELOSI were talking about the stimulus package, one thing we did not want to do is exacerbate the long-term debt that confronts us. Mr. Bernanke is very concerned about that. But certainly in the context of wanting to move quickly in an emergency way where we have an economy now that Mr. Bernanke, although he didn't say it was a recession, he certainly gave the implication that we were on the brink of that, we're very concerned about the economic policies, very frankly, that we think have led to that.

But I will say that we have two concerns: Number one, paying for what we buy, not exacerbating the deficit. But clearly we're concerned about getting relief to people that need it in the short term. But my discussions with Mr. Bernanke were, yes, tax increases in the short term he thought were not helpful, but he wanted to make it very clear that he thought making the debt worse over the long term, whether it's for international expenses or domestic expenses, was not helpful to the economy in the long term.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. BLUNT. Well, I wouldn't quarrel with the gentleman about not having a good time for tax increases since '01 and '03, but revenue actually has increased during that period of time. I think in '05, '06 and '07 we may have set records of increased revenues, percentage over last year. So, you used the term revenue, and I think you meant taxes, because we did see some revenue increases during that time, and they were significant. I think over 14 percent in FY05, and double digits in the next 2 years.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I won't debate that now, but I would be interested in discussing it at some point in time because, as you know, in those years revenues fell short of the administration's projections in the previous years. So that, although revenues did increase, you're absolutely correct, as revenues have every year over the last 50 except for 2, they increased less than the administration had projected.

Mr. BLUNT. Well, while we don't want to enter into this debate too fully, on the projections, even though

we still had deficits in those years, which I regret for a number of reasons, those deficits were always less at the end of the year than we had thought they were going to be at the beginning of the year because revenues exceeded projections. That's why the deficit was less.

The third topic, I think my last topic today, is, we're at a point in the congressional calendar where it's at least possible that, under the TPA, the Trade Promotion Authority rules, the President will send the Colombia Trade Agreement up because of the number of days left that under TPA would require a vote during the calendar we've put in place. And I wonder if the gentleman has a sense of whether the Colombia Trade Agreement process will go through the normal Trade Promotion Authority process, or if that process could possibly be shut off.

And I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for the question.

We all agree this is an important agreement, but as you know, there are still major long-standing issues to be resolved, violence being one of them, labor rights being another, trade adjustment assistance, which the gentleman referred to, as another. If the White House does choose to send up the agreement, we will discuss the full range of options available to us under the TPA and the House rules.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman, and I yield back.

ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY,
APRIL 4, 2008, TO TUESDAY,
APRIL 8, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Friday, April 4, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday next for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. REYNOLDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, May 14 marks the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence. On behalf of the

House Republican Israel Caucus, I rise today to honor the Jewish state for its significant achievements over the past six decades.

Israel has shared an important strategic relationship with our Nation. And today, our countries are working more closely than ever before to defeat the common threat of terrorism.

Research and development collaborations between our countries have produced security technologies that are now used to protect the lives of Americans, Israelis, and of people all over the world. In fact, Israeli equipment has saved the lives of hundreds of U.S. soldiers stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan. And because of Israel's desert location, farmers and agricultural experts there have been forced to adapt their irrigation methods. This research now benefits dry weather areas around the world, all because Israel discovered a way to make the desert bloom.

Over the years, I have had the great fortune to travel to Israel four times, and each trip has been marked by emotional and spiritual moments. Anyone who has traveled to Israel feels a connection to the people and places there. This is because America shares a special bond with Israel. This bond will only become stronger in the next 60 years, and I am very humbled to begin this celebration.

ISRAEL AT 60

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the State of Israel on its 60th anniversary and help kick off a series of weekly bipartisan speeches leading up to Israel's 60th anniversary.

As cochair of the Democratic Israel Working Group, I want to thank my colleague, Congressman REYNOLDS, and other members of the Republican Israel Caucus for joining us in this effort to honor and recognize the contributions Israel has made during the last 60 years.

I've been to Israel several times and can personally vouch for Israel's contributions to the global community, particularly to agriculture techniques, solar power generation, seawater desalination, academia, telecommunications, and medical technology.

In my home State of Texas, we have an economic cooperative agreement with Israel, which is one of the oldest state-to-state relationships in our country. Israel's success in innovative programs constantly serve as ideas for addressing problems facing citizens in Texas.

In the last 60 years, Israel has faced many struggles, conflicts with its neighbors, terrorism on its borders and in its neighborhoods, and led peace efforts by leaving Gaza and southern Lebanon only to be attacked from these locations.

Despite these struggles, Israel has grown from a state of less than 1 million people in 1948 to a state of over 7 million people committed to promoting human rights, protecting the rule of law, and to open and fair elections.

Israel is truly an inspiration to people around the globe. And I would like to again congratulate the Israeli people and join them in celebrating the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence.

BOEING VS. AIRBUS

(Mr. REICHERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong opposition to the decision made by the United States Air Force to choose a foreign company for their new refueling tanker. The recent Air Force decision to give the KC-X tanker contract to Airbus jeopardizes our national security. We should not send a contract that could potentially be worth more than \$40 billion to a foreign company when we have a viable American option.

Additionally, Airbus is a company that receives European government subsidies. Boeing, with the support of the government, is currently fighting Airbus at the World Trade Organization on the basis that they have an unfair advantage from these subsidies. What message does this send when our own government is fighting these subsidies on one hand and rewarding them with a \$40 billion contract on the other?

The Tacoma News Tribune recently said, "The Air Force's job was to make a business decision. Now Congress has to make a policy decision, and there's room for legitimate debate." Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree.

□ 1315

CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in saluting Israel on its 60th anniversary. And I want to also salute the strong bond and ties between the United States and the State of Israel. We have shared values, we have shared concerns, and we have had a wonderful, close ally-to-ally relationship for the past 60 years, and we want it to continue for another 60 and way beyond.

I think it's important, at this time, to reflect the fact that Israel was created in the ashes of the Holocaust, and that the United States and Israel, sharing in common bonds, there is also a moral imperative for us to continue to stand by that beleaguered State.

I think it's also important to say that we must not put pressure on Israel

to make unilateral concessions in her quest for peace. It takes two to tango, and we need to have both sides make concessions and work together.

Let's remember that Israel left Gaza. Israel left Southern Lebanon. She was willing to do land for peace, but, instead, got land for war. So we have to be very careful and not put pressure on Israel. Celebrate her 60th anniversary. And long may the close relations between our two countries continue.

COMMEMORATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, many of us gathered to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I'm always reminded that even in his death, we celebrate his life.

And as I think of him, I think of the 60th anniversary of Israel, for Dr. King was inspired by a land that sought its freedom. And so it is important that we honor this Nation State; celebrate it for peacefully living in the mid east.

And as I travel to Israel, there are more people that I meet that are peace loving, and look forward to a time when they can live alongside of their brothers and sisters in peace. Let us thank them for the history that they have, and as well, what they give around the world.

It is important to take note that Israel has trained those of us who are seeking a greater understanding of how to fight the war on terror, how to have first responders. They have certainly worked to be able to be a friend to the world.

So, again, let me congratulate Israel on its 60th anniversary, and most importantly, the people of Israel for its peace. I might also acknowledge that we extend our hand of friendship.

WELCOMING THE FIRST MINISTER OF SCOTLAND, ALEX SALMOND

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today has been historic for the Capitol building, in that today we were able, through the Friends of Scotland Caucus, to welcome the First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond. This was a great honor for me because he presented to the Heritage Golf Foundation an authentic golf club from the St. Andrews course. This was presented to the trustees of the Heritage Golf Tournament, the members who were present, John Curry and Bill Miles. And this is in recognition of the strong relationship that we have of the United

States, particularly the State of South Carolina and Scotland.

We were very pleased that the very first golf course located in North America was in South Carolina. In recognition of this, we have the Heritage Golf Classic which is held every year, April 14, this year, through the 20th, at Hilton Head Island at Sea Pines Golf Course, sponsored by Verizon. Indeed, the money raised for this goes for scholarships for persons in the low country.

This has been an exciting time for those of us Scottish heritage. Last night we had a reception with the St. Andrews Society of Washington, recognizing Alex Ferguson, the Speaker of the Scottish Parliament.

For me, the week began with a Kirkin' o' the Tartan at the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina with a program that was hosted by the St. Andrews Society of Columbia. And our church, the First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, is very grateful that our pastor is Dr. Sinclair Ferguson, who is a native and very distinguished son of Scotland.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

LET'S DO THE RIGHT THING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the 40th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King was one of the world's greatest champions of peace. He said, "We must find an alternative to war and bloodshed." He often quoted President Kennedy, who said, "Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind."

Unfortunately, the administration today seems to have a different point of view when it comes to war. Take, for example, President Bush's video conference with our military and civilian personnel in Afghanistan last month. The President told them the following, and I quote: "I must say, I'm a little envious. If I were slightly younger and not employed here, I think it would be a fantastic experience to be on the front lines in Afghanistan. It must be exciting for you, in some ways romantic, confronting danger."

Mr. Speaker, I am shocked that the Commander-in-Chief believes that war is some sort of romantic adventure. It isn't. War is hell. War, as President Kennedy said, could put an end to all mankind. Just ask the millions of Iraqis who have been forced to flee their homes since our occupation of their country began over 5 years ago.

The U.N. recently reported that the number of internally displaced Iraqis has soared to more than 2.77 million people. More than a million of them do not have adequate shelter. More than 300,000 of them do not have access to clean water.

Another 2 million Iraqis have been forced to become refugees in other countries, where they're called guests. And the conditions are as bad, or worse, because guests cannot go to work in a foreign country.

Life isn't very good for Iraqis who have stayed at home either. ABC News has reported that sizable majorities of Iraqis say they don't have electricity, they don't have fuel, clean water, medical care, or jobs.

And if anyone still thinks that war is a romantic adventure, I urge them to learn about an organization called Iraq Veterans Against the War. Recently, this group held a 4-day conference where veterans of the conflicts of Iraq and Afghanistan spoke about their experiences. These veterans gave very frank accounts of the bloodshed and destruction that they experienced or saw with their own eyes. Their descriptions of combat are heartbreaking. They are too graphic to describe here.

Let me just say that they do not agree with their Commander-in-Chief that their time on the front lines was a fantastic experience. It was more like a living nightmare that may be with them forever.

Anyone who is interested can see videos of these veterans' testimony on the Internet. There you will see brave young American men and women who went into the military because they wanted to make our country and the world safer. They were ready to sacrifice their lives for that cause. But when they saw the consequences and the inconsistencies and the horrors of this war, they decided to speak out. They are men and women of conscience who now oppose policy in Iraq because of the harm that it is doing to that country, to its people, and to our own military.

That, Mr. Speaker, is why we must move forward with the responsible redeployment of our troops out of Iraq. The administration will never do it, obviously. They've seen too many John Wayne movies, and must think that war is exciting, it must be romantic, something to be envied, because that's what they say.

So it is up to us in Congress to use our power of the purse to say, we will give you the money to safely bring our troops out, but we will not, we will not give you another penny to continue this occupation.

Two-thirds of the American people, Mr. Speaker, think that the occupation was wrong to begin with. They're right.

So let us honor Dr. Martin Luther King. Let us honor the American people by doing what they know is right. End it.

POLITICAL PRISONERS RAMOS
AND COMPEAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, as we talk about the war on the first front in Iraq and Afghanistan, we must remember that there is another war going on on the second front, and that is the border war between the United States and Mexico. All of the politicians that are running for President this year are talking about everything. Some things are just not important. But one thing they're not talking about is the border war in the south part of the United States, between Mexico and the United States.

Two years ago, two border agents by the name of Ramos and Compean were tried and convicted for doing their job on the Texas/Mexico border. What happened was, that in February of 2005, Ramos and Compean came in contact with a drug dealer. He came into the United States at Fabens, Texas. Most of America's never heard of this little small Texas town.

He's driving a van. He sees the border agents and he turns around and he tries to run back to Mexico. He abandons the van. The border agents give chase. An altercation occurred down in the Rio Grande riverbed. Shots were fired. The drug dealer disappears into Mexico.

It turns out that the drug dealer had been shot by one of the border agents, and it turns out that the van that he was driving had, get this, \$750,000 worth of drugs in the van.

So what does our Government do? Instead of trying to find the drug dealer to prosecute him, our Government goes to Mexico, finds the drug dealer and promises him a back room deal, a deal to testify against the border agents, claim that the border agents unlawfully used their firearms, even though they said they fired in self-defense. And they make a deal with him not to prosecute him for his drug smuggling if he testified. And he did testify against the border agents, and 2 years ago they were convicted.

□ 1330

But unbeknownst to the jury, and what the U.S. Attorney's Office would not let the jury know, is that before the trial took place, this star witness, backroom-deal witness, brought in another load of drugs into the United States for money. The U.S. Attorney's Office knew about it. They didn't want the jury to know about it, and they kept it out of the trial. Now the whole world knows the U.S. Attorney's Office was deceitful in that trial.

Those border agents are serving 11 to 12 years in the Federal penitentiary. The President pardoned 157 people in his administration. Fifteen of them last week. Some of them were drug dealers. But why doesn't the President pardon these border patrol agents for doing their job?

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has heard this case. I suspect they will reverse it because the U.S. Attorney's Office was deceitful in the trial and prosecution of these two border agents because they were relentless in prosecuting them.

Our government is on the wrong side of the border war. We're trying to hire more border agents, and people don't want to join the Border Patrol. One reason is because our government doesn't support them. When an altercation takes place, they side with the other guys instead of siding with our border agents.

And this is not the first time the U.S. Attorney's Office has been caught cheating in a trial. A border agent by the name of David Sipe was arrested by our government because he was in a fight and assault with a drug dealer down in Texas. And he was prosecuted for a civil rights violation, but it turns out in his trial the U.S. Attorney's Office hid evidence in that case as well, but they got caught; and that case was retried and the jury found David Sipe not guilty because the U.S. Attorney's Office, once again, didn't want the jury to know the truth about the person that came in contact with our border agent.

So it's time our government gets on the right side of the border war. Defend our boarder patrol agents. Secure the border. Make sure that the war on the second front is won, that people not be allowed to come into the United States illegally for any purpose, especially drug smugglers; and our government needs to quit taking the side of drug dealers from foreign countries and start siding with the American Border Patrol because they're doing their job to protect the rest of us.

And that's just the way it is.

WHERE ARE THE GOOD GOVERN-
ANCE AND DIPLOMACY IN IRAQ?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, next week, the chief commander of U.S. forces in Iraq will be up here before Congress, General David Petraeus, and he will be reporting on the conduct of the war. I can remember about a year ago, quite a large delegation from our defense subcommittee spent some time with General Petraeus in Iraq; and one statement that he made at that time remains in my mind, and I have shared it with every audience I have gone before. He said, Victory equals one-third military and two-thirds good governance and diplomacy. The two-thirds is missing.

Victory equals one-third military and two-thirds good governance and diplomacy and the two-thirds is missing in Iraq. So where does that place our soldiers? I have asked myself that every single minute of every single day since that discussion. The good governance and the diplomacy are nowhere.

The President of our country says, Well, I'm going to listen to my commanders in theater.

No, no. President Bush is the Commander in Chief. The military is doing their job, but they can only do one-third of the job. The other two-thirds rests on the top political leadership of this country, and they, and I would include every person in this room, and we have not done our jobs because the political equation, the good governance and diplomacy piece, is totally missing.

And so more soldiers die, more Iraqis die, and what is the vision? What is the vision for ultimate victory and exit of our troops? There isn't any. The President said mission was accomplished. No, the mission was just begun, but there is no end game.

Within Iraq, we have a corrupt and incapable state. They have billions of dollars in their budget unspent, our money, their money from oil. They're not spending it, yet the American people are going to be asked to appropriate another \$170 billion here? Think about it, my friends.

Within Iraq, we broke the State. In Iraq, 2½ million people thrown out of their homes within the country and another 2½ million fleeing for their lives to Syria, to Jordan. And you know what? They will never be citizens of those countries. They're guests. They're actually refugees. We saw what happened with the Palestinians post-World War II, 600,000 of them still a refugee population with no homeland. And look at the difficulty that has caused the world.

So you say, Well, what is the mission? Are we winning the war on terrorism? Is America any more secure?

Well, we are having trouble in Afghanistan. The President had to beg NATO for more forces in Afghanistan. We've now got over 40,000 troops there. The situation there is not getting any better. And Pakistan, at the provincial level, the worst elements are being elected. Maybe that isn't the right adjective. But those that are most anti-American are being elected. There's trouble between Afghanistan and Pakistan at the border in those provinces. We don't have a solution there.

And Turkey, our closest ally in NATO for years. What is happening with elections at the provincial level there, mayors and so forth? The most anti-American individuals are being elected. That is true in Pakistan at the provincial level.

So you can say all you want to say about winning this war on terrorism, but how do you win a war when the majority of the people turn against this country? And you say to our military, You fix it. You fix it.

General Petraeus' testimony up here next week simply isn't enough. We need to hear from the President of the United States, not just passing the buck to, Well, let the generals tell me what to do. No. What is he going to do to accomplish this mission and bring

our troops home and begin to repair the image of the United States across a vast growing region of the world where we are losing friends every day from North Africa, from Egypt, all the way through to Pakistan and Afghanistan? What are we going to do to correct the damage that is producing more terrorists, more anti-Americanism and less resolution?

Don't just place this burden on the backs of our brilliant military. They have been asked to do everything this President has sent them to do. But as General Petraeus wisely told us a year ago, victory means one-third military and two-thirds good governance and diplomacy, and the two-thirds is missing and it has been missing and it is missing.

What can we do? Why didn't the President take two of our exemplary ambassadors, people like Zbigniew Brzezinski and James Baker, put them on the same airplane, send them over to Iraq, work with the neighboring countries of Iraq, give us a date certain in order to begin redeploying forces to an over-the-horizon position? Give us a time: 6 months, 1 year, 1 year and 3 months? Let's have a plan. There is no plan.

The only plan is to send more troops to keep extending deployments to put more burden on our military, to ask our Marines to become civilian officials within that country with the civilian workload when they're trying to be a strike force. What kind of solution is that? It's asking too much of our military. Let's give them the respect they're due but ask the person in charge as Commander in Chief to give America the plan for victory and ultimate redeployment from that region and building back the kind of friendships with adjoining nations that will not give our children and grandchildren the burden of fighting terrorism two decades or more down the road.

SUNSET MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I stand once again before this body with yet another Sunset Memorial.

It is April 3, 2008, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun set today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand—just today. That is more than the number of innocent American lives that were lost on September 11th, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,855 days since the travesty called *Roe v. Wade* was handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of our own children.

Some of them, Mr. Speaker, cried and screamed as they died, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over their vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.

All of them had at least four things in common.

They were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. Each one of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each of their mothers, whether she realizes it immediately or not, will never be the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever.

Yet even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation clings to a blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims to date, those yet unborn.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is important for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here.

Thomas Jefferson said, "The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government."

The phrase in the 14th amendment encapsulates our entire Constitution. It says: "No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law." Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our innocent citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here. It is our sworn oath.

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is that clarion Declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. It is who we are.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection that we should have given them.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude, in the hope that perhaps someone new who heard this sunset memorial tonight will finally embrace the truth that abortion really does kill little babies, that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express, and that 12,855 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children in America is enough; and that the America that rejected human slavery and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust, is still courageous and compassionate enough to find a better way for mothers and their babies than abortion on demand.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are also numbered and that all too soon each of us will walk from these Chambers for the very last time.

And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day to come, may that be the day when we finally hear the cries of the innocent unborn. May that be the day we find the humanity, the courage, and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect the least of these, our tiny American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.

It is April 3, 2008—12,855 days since *Roe v. Wade* first stained the foundation of this Nation with the blood of its own children—this, in

the land of the free and the home of the brave.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NEED FOR SAFE VACCINATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's made the United States and the world healthier than at any period of the world has been vaccinations. Vaccinations have stopped so many dreaded diseases from killing hundreds of thousands, millions of people, it's not even funny.

But while vaccines have saved so many lives, there have also been some shortcomings in vaccines. When I was chairman of the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, I held hearings on autism; and we have gone from 1 in 10,000 children who are autistic to 1 in 150. We have an absolute epidemic of autism in this country, and hundreds of thousands of families have been affected and they have nowhere to turn.

Because of that, we passed in the 1980s what was called the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund, and it was supposed to take care of families and people who were injured by vaccines and had nowhere to turn. Well, that was supposed to be a nonconfrontational system. But unfortunately, there has been nobody, up until recently, who has been paid out of the vaccine compensation fund. And one of the reasons is because Health and Human Services and the Food and Drug Administration have said that the mercury in vaccines, 50 percent of it is a preservative called thimerosal. The mercury in vaccines did not cause autism, and there have been a lot of studies that have come out saying the mercury in the vaccines was not a root cause of the autism crisis that we have in this country.

In fact, in 2004, there was a report that said categorically that the thimerosal, the mercury in the vaccines, was not a cause of autism. And yet, just recently, in the *Journal of Child Neurology*, an article published by Drs. DeSoto and Hiltan, both doctors, reexamined that study and they said it was in error and that there was no doubt that the mercury in the vaccinations was a contributing factor to the epidemic of autism that we have in this country.

As a result of that and other information, some of the test cases that have been raised and are in progress right now have come before the special master. And just recently, a young

lady who was damaged by vaccinations, a young lady from Georgia, Hannah Poling, her case went before the special master, and the Justice Department had five attorneys who said that this young lady was not damaged in part by the mercury in the vaccinations. This young lady got five vaccinations in one day, most of which contained thimerosal, which is 50 percent ethyl-mercury. Shortly thereafter, she became autistic.

The same thing happened to my grandson. He got nine shots in one day, and within a short time, he became autistic. I won't go into all of the details of what happens when you become autistic, but it is certainly a tremendous change in the lives of not only the child but the entire family.

But anyhow, this case went before the special master along with two others. And just recently, a decision was made in that case by the special master; and in spite of the evidence that was presented by the Health and Human Services, the FDA, and the Justice Department, the special master awarded damages to this family and said that this girl was damaged by the vaccination. And the case was brought because this young lady took several shots, five in one day, that had mercury in them. So this is the first case that shows, in my opinion, that the mercury in vaccines is a contributing factor to the epidemic of autism that we have in this country.

The reason I come before the floor tonight to talk about this is it's time that we got mercury out of all vaccinations. We've been able to get it out of most of the children's vaccinations, but it's still in some. I think it is in three or four now. It needs to be out of all children's vaccinations.

We have had an increase in the cases of Alzheimer's in this country, and that's because in part, in my opinion, because mercury is in almost all of the adult vaccinations. When you get a flu shot or almost any kind of a shot, you're getting ethyl-mercury injected into your body. Now if we eat fish, they tell us to be careful because there's mercury in the fish and it may cause neurological damage. Yet, we are injecting it into ourselves and into our children through vaccinations.

It's high time that the Food and Drug Administration, Health and Human Services, and the pharmaceutical industry decides we want vaccinations because they give us a better quality of life and makes us live longer and prevents us from getting diseases, but we have to get mercury out of all vaccinations out of anything that goes into the human body; and until we do that, the problems with autism and other neurological diseases will continue to rise.

So I would like to say to my colleagues, I hope you will pay attention to this special order tonight. We have to get mercury out of all vaccinations. We can do it with single-shot vials that will not require that preservative; and

once we do that, I think we will have a much better quality of life, and people will be able to get vaccinations without worrying about becoming autistic.

□ 1345

CONGRESSIONAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION PRESENTED TO THE FAMILY OF CHARLES COOPERI' THORNTONA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, April 4, will mark the date that Martin Luther King departed and went for his just rewards. I have a theory that messengers are sent to Earth to make us better human beings. And if you go back in history, Jesus Christ left early in his thirties, the Kennedy brothers left early in their thirties, and Martin Luther King, after he had done his work, left us.

And so we are very fortunate to be able to participate in a service today honoring the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I would like to pay tribute to someone from the State of California who can be described as a "diamond in the sky."

Charles Thornton left this Earth about 2 weeks ago, and I presented his family with a Congressional Memorial Certificate of Recognition:

"Whereas he was preceded in death by parents Polly and Jimmie Thornton and godson Gary Parker.

"Whereas he leaves behind lifelong soul mate Christine; children Kishaun and Charles Thornton, Victoria and Aurea Smith and Chris Bale; grandsons DeAndre and Jaydn; and siblings Jim, Sandra, Pamela, and Timothy Thornton and also Debra.

"Whereas, as a musician, artist, and coach, Charles touched many lives. A big-hearted father figure who thrived on making others happy. A legend, never to be forgotten.

"Be it resolved that Charles Thornton be immortalized as a humanitarian, who shared his life to make it better for his fellow man and left an outstanding lasting legacy for his family and friends. May he rest in peace."

And may I just share a poem that was written called "A Diamond in the Sky," and it's a tribute from his brothers Jim and Tim and also written by Alice Holmes McKoy:

Stand and take a bow;
As you leave us for the pureness of heaven,
You have left us in this mist of life;
What becomes a legend most . . . you, my brother;

The one who reached out to everyone.
You chose to engage to interact to love;
Sharing and caring, never too busy to do.
Why you? The original rock of our world has been called to your eternal rest with the Lord;

You were supposed to let me know these things in advance . . . after all,

I am your brother . . . but it's all right;
As you sit with Jesus, Mom, Dad, and young Gary,
Man, know that you will always be loved and appreciated; and as I look into the sky tonight . . .
I see you . . . a diamond in the sky.

THE PROTECT AMERICA ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it's now 1:48 p.m. on Thursday afternoon. Throughout the Nation, folks are finishing the day shift, getting ready to finish the day shift. People who work the afternoon shift are getting ready for work. Those who work the night shift are probably snoozing a little bit so they can get up in a few moments and start it all over again this evening. And where's the House, Mr. Speaker? The House has gone home. The House has gone home.

Now, why is that important? Well, we have just finished 2 weeks at home talking to constituents about issues great and small. They're concerned about a lot of things, Mr. Speaker. They're concerned about gas prices. They're concerned about the housing situation. And in my district, the Sixth District of Georgia, I get constant questions about national security: What is Congress doing to make certain that our Nation is safe? And that's important because, Mr. Speaker, today is the 48th day, the 48th day, of a unilateral disarmament on behalf of the Democrat leadership of the House of Representatives.

Why do I say that? Well, Mr. Speaker, we are at the 48th day now where the Protect America Act has been allowed to expire. This isn't going to happen in the future. This has happened. This Speaker, this Democrat leadership, has allowed the Protect America Act to expire.

Now, what's the Protect America Act? Well, it's an act, a portion of amendments that were adopted to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act shortly after 9/11. And what this portion of it allows that was allowed to expire is for the United States, our intelligence community, to listen or intercept electronic communication or phone communication between a foreign individual in a foreign land talking to a foreign individual in a foreign land. Not an American citizen, not on American soil. That means, Mr. Speaker, what they would be allowed to do is to listen to a potential terrorist or a terrorist talking to another potential terrorist or a terrorist outside the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I asked every single group that I spoke with at home for 2 weeks, who believes that our intelligence community ought not have the authority to do that, to listen to a terrorist talking to another terrorist outside the United States, talking potentially about how to do you, me, and our

Nation harm? I didn't find a single individual who didn't think that was the right thing to do.

But this leadership, this Speaker, this Democrat leadership has allowed that act to expire. Why? Because they believe that trial lawyers ought to have the ability to represent foreign individuals in the same way that the United States Constitution protects Americans.

Mr. Speaker, that's wrong. Many in my district and I believe also that it's a dereliction of duty. It's an abrogation of duty. It's a violation of the oath that we take as Members of the House of Representatives to uphold the Constitution and to protect and defend the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I call on this leadership, I call on this Speaker, to allow this House to vote on the Protect America Act, a bill, amendments that the Senate passed 68-29, in a bipartisan way; a bill that the majority of this House, the majority, Democrats and Republicans combined, have said they will support if allowed to vote on the floor. Mr. Speaker, this is essential to the protection of the United States of America and to reverse the unilateral disarmament that has come about because of the leadership of the majority party.

Mr. Speaker, I call on this leadership to bring this bill up as soon as we come back next week and do the people's business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRATULATING THE HOWARD PAYNE LADY JACKETS BASKETBALL TEAM ON THEIR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AND PERFECT SEASON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Howard Payne University Lady Jackets on their 2008 NCAA Division III Women's Basketball National Championship. In this, their fourth consecutive appearance in the tournament, the Lady Jackets defeated the Messiah University Falcons 68-54. Winning the National Championship was a fitting end to an unbelievable season for this rising basketball powerhouse. From day one the women of the Lady Jackets unwaveringly pursued excellence, and in the end they achieved perfection. The Lady Jackets finished with a record of 33-0, the only perfect record of any of the 3,823 men's and women's collegiate basketball teams in this country.

Located in Brownwood, Texas, Howard Payne University is a small school of 1,400 students that I am honored to represent. As Division III athletes, the members of the Lady Jackets team receive no scholarships or lucrative contracts for their collegiate exploits. Rather, these women play for the thrill of competition and the glory of their achievements. Every minute of every team practice, at every meeting, and every game is endured for the love of basketball.

I am proud to commend the Lady Jackets today, not only for their victories but also for their dedication to their sport and to each other in the drive to be the best. It is my great pleasure to extend my personal congratulations to team members Tiffany Warner, Katy Sarem, Stephanie Brewer, Mionca Hall, Daphnie Pippins, Kimberly Hoffman, Makiesha Davis, Meia Daniels, Elaine Hobbs, Stacey Blalock, Hope Hohertz, Sarah Pfiester, and Sarah Jockers on their remarkable accomplishments.

I'd also like to congratulate coaches Mr. Chris Kielsmeier and Ms. Lindy Hatfield, who coached this year's team. This season belongs to them as well. While a coach's devotion to their team is often displayed simply in the wins column, this perfect season speaks volumes about Mr. Kielsmeier and Ms. Hatfield's ability to bring out the very best of their players and nurture the talents of their team.

Mr. Speaker, hallowed as these walls that we work in are, we rarely have an opportunity to witness perfection, that which cannot be improved upon. Lest we forget what such accomplishments look like, the women of the Lady Jackets have reminded us that there are rare moments in time when imperfect individuals can work together to achieve perfect results. I hope that by taking time to celebrate these small moments we can remind ourselves the importance of working together to achieve success.

And, again, Lady Jackets, congratulations on a very unforgettable season.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REMEMBERING THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I joined a bipartisan group of Members of the House and Senate just a few short hours ago here in the Capitol where we were accompanied by Martin Luther

King III, and we gathered to remember a day that tens of millions of Americans will pause to remember tomorrow. That was the day that saw the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 40 years ago.

I rise today as someone who, as a 9-year-old boy, was deeply inspired by the example of Dr. King and as a 9-year-old boy who was shaped by those tragic events.

But I also rise today as a Hoosier and as a congressman representing Muncie, Indiana, because it may not be known to many, Mr. Speaker, but both Indiana, and Muncie, Indiana, in particular, played a small role in the unfolding drama of that day, April 4, 1968. And I will borrow generously from an article written by Nick Werner recently in the Muncie Star Press as I reflect on that connection.

Muncie helped shape history after the King assassination because it was in Muncie and at Ball State University where Senator Robert Kennedy was speaking. He was speaking at the men's gym, which is now Irving gym. He was running for President of the United States. And it was there after his speech, as he was moving through the crowd, that historians recall and record that he had first learned of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. And as he went to the Muncie Airport and traveled from the Muncie Airport to Indianapolis, Robert Kennedy would prepare what for all the world appeared to be an impromptu speech but one that perhaps he had been writing all of his life. A speech that he would deliver to a stunned crowd in Indianapolis that night, and it was a speech that I rise today to remember.

It was humbling to me, despite our differences on philosophy and politics, to sit today on the same row with Senator TED KENNEDY as we remembered the tragic events of that day.

Robert Kennedy stood before a largely black audience in an outside park in Indianapolis, and he spoke these words:

"I have some very sad news for all of you and I think sad news for all our fellow citizens and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and was killed tonight in Memphis, Tennessee." As Nick Werner wrote: "The crowd gasped and screamed, but they remained fixed on Kennedy as he continued speaking, words that condemned violence and lawlessness.

He said, and I add, "For those of you who are black, considering the evidence evidently that there were white people who were responsible, you can be filled with bitterness, with hatred, and a desire for revenge. But," he added, "what we need in the United States is not division. What we need in the United States is not hatred. What we need is not violence and lawlessness, but love and wisdom, compassion toward one another. He asked those gathered to "return home tonight to say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King. Yeah, that's true, but

more importantly, say a prayer for our country, which all of us love; a prayer for understanding and the compassion of which I spoke."

□ 1400

After he spoke those words, rioting would break out in more than 100 cities across the United States. But Indianapolis was peaceful. Robert Kennedy would go on to a tragic end of his own.

But I rise today as an American shaped by the courage in the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and I will remember tomorrow with gratitude his example. I will also say very humbly that the words of Robert Kennedy are as true today as ever, and that Muncie, Indiana, and the State of Indiana, will always be proud of the small role we played as a backdrop to those historic and tragic events.

May the words of Robert Kennedy, may the example of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., continue to inspire our Nation to aspire to a more perfect union.

UNITY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YARMUTH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before I discuss the topic upon which I arise to speak, I do want to join my colleagues in celebrating the reauthorization of the United States Fire Administration Act. As a member of the Homeland Security Committee since its origin after 2001, I am a direct witness of the work of our first responders around the Nation. It is important that we recognize the elements of this bill and the funding that is necessary to ensure a system of first responders that works.

Yesterday, I met with the chiefs of the fire departments of departments in my State of Texas. I salute them. Through their efforts, we were able to pass this bill. I congratulate the sponsor, and I believe that the National Fire Incident Reporting System improvements that will come about are important; the fire technology assistance and dissemination will be important that is reauthorized; the encouraging of the adoption of standards for firefighter health and safety, one of the ills that we are still dealing with after 9/11, people who have gotten sick after 9/11 and still not addressed; and the coordination on fire service-based emergency medical services is important; and as well, the funding that will come about, upwards of \$100 million.

Certainly, I encourage them to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the work that we can do together. Congratulations on the reauthorization of this bill. I stand as a strong supporter.

I rise today, as my colleagues have done, to acknowledge the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King.

That will be tomorrow. I head to Memphis to commemorate that. I just got through speaking to a number of constituents from Texas Southern University and from Prairie View A&M. I asked them about presidential politics. They were thoughtful and discussed with me the balance that they saw in the candidates that happened to be running in the Democratic primary.

What I have seen as we watched this debate is really a call on the sensitivities of America, race and gender, and we have seen the tensions and the divisiveness; rather than focus on the message and mission of an American hero like Dr. King, who talked about unity and talked about, as was said by his son today, the horrible evil of racism and poverty and militarism. But even in that voice, he spoke of unity.

Today, I rise to call upon the candidates themselves, that whoever will run to the mike first and call upon unity in America may find a surprising response from all the voters, wherever they might be. For Americans are good people. They extend themselves to the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq so that others might have freedom and democracy.

I might imagine that our soldiers would look back on this divisiveness and the name calling and someone castigating one person because they are for one candidate over another, and ask whether or not we truly understand freedom and democracy. It is choice, it is the ability to make your choice. Yet, it is the ability to come together and unify around the goodness of America.

I was glad to hear Majority Whip CLYBURN say today that, "time is neutral." As Martin Luther King said, "It is neutral because it says nothing. It is what you do with it." What he reminded us is that people of ill will seem to use time more effectively than people of good will.

I truly believe that we have outstanding Americans running for this office. I will be pushing for the one that happens to be in my party, strongly and enthusiastically. But what I will come to this floor and this Congress for is to join me in putting together a reconciliation commission in America. Not just because of the candidacy and the campaigns that we have seen, but because Americans are still sensitive about race and about gender, two groups of people that have been disenfranchised in our history. Yet, we are blessed to be in America, recognizing that many of us have made strides. I am proud to stand here as an African American woman. Some might say I have double issues. But I have double benefits, double celebration.

Yet, there are those who I believe would benefit from having this broad discussion, this reconciliation in America about women who were disenfranchised until 1920, woman who suffer from the lack of pay equity, and those who live under a minority umbrella, who themselves still remain discriminated against in schools and jobs and in corporate America.

Mr. Speaker, we can benefit from this wonderful debate and discourse between someone who's an African American male with the potential of being the President of the United States and a woman who has the potential of being President of the United States. Why don't we celebrate in that difference and diversity? Why don't we call for unity, because America is greater than our individual differences. As Martin Luther King said, "It can be the promised land. Why don't we attempt to go there together."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HUNTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BE A PART OF THE CHANGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honor to come before the House once again. I can share with you, as Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE just finished speaking about, the wonderful ceremony that we had today, but sad ceremony, reflecting on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King some 40 years later. To see Democrats and Republicans standing side by side, to have reflection from those that worked beside Dr. King, like our very own JOHN LEWIS and Majority Whip CLYBURN, who talked about his experience and first meeting that he met with him in 1960 in Morehouse University, to Majority Leader REID reflecting on, the Senate reflecting on how he worked here in the Capitol at that time as a part of the crowd outside; and others that shared stories of their time when Dr. King walked the Earth; his son, Martin Luther King, III, who reflected on his father's death and his memory and charged the House and the Senate to carry out efforts against poverty, also to deal with the issue of war and conflict, and also looking at the very issue of making sure that we

stand up for the least of these, as many of us are very, very familiar with. Mr. Speaker, I also believe that it's important in that light to have Americans, and as leaders of this great country of ours, have Americans remember the past, but look forward in a forward leaning way to the future.

I had the opportunity to talk to the National Association of Black Realtors or African American Realtors over at Union Station just about 30 minutes ago. It reminded me of a story, and I shared it with them, of when my mother served here in the House of Representatives and I had the opportunity as a State legislator to come up to see her sworn in once again. While I was up here, I had a chance to run into one of my good friends, Reverend Jesse Jackson.

He spoke to a group of folks that were here that day when his son was sworn into Congress for the first time. He said that he could not help but to get emotional. He got emotional when he was sharing with us how that experience was a moving experience for him because he reflected on the story of his father, who fought in World War II, and after World War II was over, came back to the United States. But he was taking the train going south and riding behind the prisoner of wars when they went through Union Station. And his father couldn't help reflect that he saw the United States Capitol, but even though he fought on behalf of his country, felt that he did not move forward because he was behind prisoners of war in his own country. And that God would have him live long enough for his grandson to become a Member of Congress is an example of how this country can correct itself over time. We still have a long way to go and a short time to get there. I shared that with them because many of us are professionals and have an opportunity to take part in this democracy and be a part of the change in America.

I can say that tomorrow will be a day for the country to pause and to recognize the contributions of one of the greatest Americans that ever walked the Earth, and that's Dr. King. I look forward to participating in that reflection like I did today.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share just a few thoughts with the House, as we have now broken for the week and will be back next week and the business of the people of the United States of America will continue. The New Direction Democratic Congress are about working with some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle about solutions, Mr. Speaker, and not just conversation.

I think it's important for us to look at what has taken place under the Capitol Dome. I was on the floor yesterday evening and I spoke to the Members on how we are going to have to work together to be able to help everyday Americans work through their real life issues that they are facing now. Long ago, we knew of not only predatory

lending practices, but we also knew of the fact that there are a number of Americans that are going to hit hard times, and many pieces of legislation passed off of this floor riding on the backs of everyday Americans, individuals that punch in and punch out every day, those that try to carry out the American dream by purchasing a home and getting their piece of the American pie.

For many Americans, that is the only savings they have. A home is a way to be able to allow their blood line, wherever they may be in rural America, urban America, wherever their background may be, if they are a citizen or resident of this country, to be able to educate their children, to be able to borrow money to be able to educate their children, or to be able to allow their children to have something that they can call a piece of the rock or a piece of the American pie.

I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, that a number of those families, and I mean they are in the millions, are in jeopardy right now of losing the very thing that they can hold on to. They may not own their car, they may not necessarily have a lot of money. But what they do have are homes. Many of these individuals are up in age. They have fewer tomorrows than they have yesterdays. They are finding themselves in a situation of not having the financial means to be able to protect their home.

□ 1415

One of the cornerstones of public service is to make sure that we come up and we protect those individuals and that we make sure those Americans are not left behind. I do know that this Congress in the past, not this Democratic Congress, but Congresses before, have attempted to stimulate the economy through tax breaks for the very super-wealthy and the super-rich, saying it will trickle down to the everyday American. That hasn't happened. This is a perfect example that it hasn't happened.

This week the Senate worked very hard, Leader REID and others, with Senate bill 2636, the Keep Families From Facing Foreclosures in Their Homes. This "new direction" Congress came here saying that we are here to represent the American people; not just Democrats, not just independents, not just Republicans, but the American people, and we have done that. We have been able to enact measures into law expanding affordable mortgage loan opportunities through the Federal Housing Administration for families that are in danger of losing their home by increasing the FHA loan limits up to \$729,750 within the economic stimulus bill which passed recently.

Also we have passed a measure to prevent homeowners from facing a tax bill at the same time they are losing their homes through H.R. 3638, the Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Act. We also expanded Federal counseling for

families in danger of losing their homes through foreclosure through the FY 2008 omnibus appropriations bill.

I think it is important for us to talk about what we have done in this Congress versus what we haven't done. But I can tell you that since I started out with what has already happened, and more has to happen, because we still have individuals that are out there that are hurting. It is not enough in my district, the 17th Congressional District, that we are going to have a foreclosure prevention workshop, where we are going to have lenders and counselors there to be able to talk to them. My constituents need more than that. The American people need more than that. By the fact they voted for me on a given Tuesday, early one Tuesday, by federalizing me, allowing me to come to Congress and other Members of Congress to come here, we are here to represent their best interests. So we have to continue to move forward.

These are measures that have passed the House but have not become law. Strengthening consumer protection against risky housing loans in the future; H.R. 3915, the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act; expanding affordable housing mortgage opportunities for families in danger of losing their homes through the Federal Housing Administration reform, which is H.R. 1852. This bill passed both House and Senate and is supported by the White House, I must add, but has been held up by one Senator due to his opposition to the temporary FHA loan limit increase.

I think it is important that everyone understands that this has to be a group effort. Back home in my district, folks don't understand one individual having a problem with it, but that is going back to the rules in one of our chambers here in Congress. Also it strengthens regulations of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, and raised the loan limits and increased the amount of the loan through H.R. 1427. It goes on and on and on of efforts that we have tried to pass here in the Congress and become law, but for some reason, have not.

So next week the House, under Chairman FRANK's leadership and the Financial Services Committee, will work very hard to address these issues through legislation. The act we are bringing forth will be comprehensive legislation to address the housing crisis that we face here in America, and the legislation will help stabilize the housing market, which is the first step to rebounding our economy. The measure will do many of the things that I just talked about that are held up either in the legislative process or procedural maneuvers that have taken place or objections by the White House.

It would also prevent the value, as it relates to homes, the value of homes going down. It will work towards that. Chairman FRANK's legislation will loan \$10 billion to States and localities to purchase and rehab foreclosed properties.

This is very, very important, Mr. Speaker and Members. As we talk about 1 million Americans losing their homes in the last year, with a prediction that 2 million will lose their homes this year, imagine how back home America is going to look, need it be small or large. Homes that are vacant, Americans not able to receive loans to be able to buy those homes. In rural America, homes vacant without having individuals able to move into those homes. You know they will fall into disrepair. This \$10 billion will stimulate the economy, and that will increase American jobs. They are not jobs overseas, but are jobs right here.

I think it is very important that we pay very close attention to this. I want to commend the Democratic leadership for continuing to push this measure forward in light of so many accomplishments that have taken place since the Democratic Congress has been put into place.

I want to mention just a few of them so that my time on the floor today just won't be about describing what our problem is in America, but to talk about how we are making real change here in Washington, DC. I have been here 6 years. I have seen more happen in the last year than I saw in the 4 years prior to this time, the 4 years prior to this Congress.

There was the minimum wage increase that was signed into law that passed in 2007. There was stem cell research enhancement, which was sent to the President's desk in June of 2007. Also we implemented all of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, which were recommendations that came out of a bipartisan commission. They were all implemented by this House and by the Senate and sent to the President and he signed it. Also repealing subsidies to big oil and reinvesting in renewable energy.

I want to stop right there. That is a major accomplishment. Just yesterday I noticed that a number of the independent truck drivers went on strike. They went on strike because of the high cost of diesel fuel. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, if we were doing the kind of things that this Congress has done 4 years ago, this country would not be as dependent on Middle Eastern oil as we are now. The President's response to what needed to happen 2 years ago or 3 years ago was "America is addicted to oil."

Well, to talk about something and blame the American people saying we are addicted to oil is not an answer and not a solution. I can tell you, this legislation that passed this house by 264-163 is the kind of Congress that the American people voted for to be able to lead this country in a new direction and to move this country in a new direction, or, as a matter of fact, let me put this way, move this Congress in a new direction, which has happened and will continue to happen.

We also are making college more affordable. I think that is very, very im-

portant. It was one of the first pieces of legislation that we passed in this new Congress, to cut student loan rates in half.

I think it is very, very important that we look at these measures as accomplishments and not as wedges that will cut Democrats from Republicans, because the American people ultimately are counting on us to move in the right direction.

Since we know what is going to happen next week, and it will be one of the major actions that will take place, when Chairman FRANK will have a chance to start considering the markup for his piece of legislation out of this committee, we also have to reflect on the reports that we will be receiving on the status of what is happening in Iraq.

As many of the Members know, recently we had an uptick in violence. That should not be shocking, because one of the leaders of one of the insurgent groups over in Iraq said they were going to take 6 months off to regroup.

The American people have put a lot of money, or this Congress has put a lot of money on the ground in Iraq, and I am talking about outside of the money that we have supplied to protect our troops and the men and women that are over there that are civilians, but I am saying cash money on the streets in Iraq.

Now, here is where the rub comes in and here is where the leadership has to begin. We have to start not only having the discussion, we have to take action and make sure that we bring our men and women home and that we bring them home faster than what the President is looking to bring them home, the timeline he is looking to bring them home. As a matter of fact, he is not looking to bring them home any time soon. There are members of the Senate that are talking about 100 years or what have you.

But I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker and Members, when we broke for Easter to go and spend 2 days at Camp Pendleton, which is one of the largest Marine bases we have in the country, over on the West Coast in California. I stayed on base purposely so that we would have an opportunity to interface with those that are in uniform and their families.

Of course, the word gets around that there is a Member of Congress on base. That is not an everyday event, because there are only 500 and some Members of Congress. I think that it is important that we have a chance to interface, because I think that this Congress needs to understand and the Bush White House needs to understand that this is not just about buying smart bombs. It is not just about buying MWRAP vehicles. It is not just about making sure that they have the ammunition that they need and the kevlar that they need to protect themselves. All of those things that I mentioned are very worthy, and they are the reason why we have the number one military on the face of the Earth.

But I think there is also a human side to this and that we should be just as excited about trying to assist those individuals, and that is on the family side and the human side of what is happening to our men and women in Iraq.

When I first got on the base, Mr. Speaker, I noticed a billboard that was an electronic billboard that had on there, if you are in need of counseling or if you are in need of group therapy, please call this number. I was pleased to see that, because so many times we feel that the only injury that could possibly happen when we see one of our patriots come back is one of losing an arm or a leg, or those that have Purple Heart tags that are traveling throughout America.

But many of those injuries from this conflict are between the ears of the stress and also some of the concussion bombs that are going on over in Iraq. And these Americans have fought more than any other American soldier, marine, sailor, airman, Coast Guard, than any other time in the history of the republic; longer than World War II, longer than world World War I, longer than Vietnam, longer than Korea and the other conflicts, and on and on. These Americans are special because they are unique, and we have to make sure that we do what we have to do.

Now, let me just say this: The Democratic Congress has made sure that the VA received the most money that it has ever received in the history of the Republic, in the history of the VA, making sure that our men and women get what they need when they come back. And as they continue to come back, that is there for them. We have to make sure that we take action as we look at this budget and as we have the debate about this war in Iraq, that we bring our men and women home more sooner than later.

Now, I have heard some Members on the floor talk about things that Iraqi children and women and men and boys and what have you, that they don't have the opportunity to do or they didn't have the opportunity to do until we got there.

□ 1430

Let me just share something with you. It is good to have goodwill and all of those things throughout the world, but right here in America, Mr. Speaker, and as a Member of Congress I think it is important that we also understand, that there are Americans right now, women, children, boys, men, girls, our seniors that don't have; because \$70 billion, \$100 billion, \$200 billion are on the ground in Iraq and on and on and on, and we are sitting here thinking, we have Members running around here talking about we need earmark reform. Well, guess what. Reform has happened. There are fewer earmarks than there were in the previous Republican Congress and the Congress before that. And, that we have disclosure. Americans can go on Members'

Web sites and can go and can see exactly what the request that they are making.

You want to talk about reform. More has happened in the last 14 months in the Democratic new direction Congress than at any other time since I have been in Congress. So when we look at these issues and they stand here and talk about a \$250 project, as Mr. RYAN talked about yesterday, an EPA mandated project on the local government, complaining about that; meanwhile, looking and not even paying attention to the mountain of debt that we have in this country that was built up by the Bush administration and his friends here in Congress on the Republican side, but not even looking at the \$70 billion that individuals voted for to continue this effort in Iraq saying that we have to help the poor people of Iraq.

Now, let me tell you something. I may feel a little warm and fuzzy about the \$70 billion, saying maybe that is right, if the Iraqi government was working under the same light that we are working under here. I think it is important that we reflect on what is happening right here in America, what is happening two blocks away from this Capitol; that we have individuals that are in poverty, we have individuals that don't have health care. Not individuals, but Americans that don't have health care. We have veterans that are sitting right out as I speak now in front of the Lincoln memorial at the last outpost that are in need.

I was out there, and sometimes, Mr. Speaker and Members, I take my children and we ride our bikes down the mall here, and we pass by the Washington monument, and then we move on and we go by the World War II memorial, and then we go by, we go down to the reflection pool and go down to the Lincoln memorial. And every time we are there, we stop to talk to those veterans. And there is one, they are there, veterans from Korea and veterans from Vietnam, and sometimes every now and then you will get a Gulf War I veteran that is out there. And I start talking to them about health care and many of them don't even know I am a Member of Congress or what have you. What is happening at the VA? What is happening with you in your everyday life? And you would be shocked how many times I have been there, in that very short time talking to them taking a break, and they pull pills out of their pocket into their hands because it is time for them to take one of the cocktails they have to take to be able to deal with those demons they have been having to deal with all of those years.

Now, I am going to say, those individuals allow us to salute one flag, those individuals allow me to sit here as an American congressman and speak my mind in this democracy, and I salute them. Beyond mentioning their commitment to this country and the fact that their comrades, some of them did not make it back, which are also

there in the various memorials that are on the mall.

I say all of this because Members are taking this time lightly. And I have shared many times that I have come to the floor, as I move towards a close here, Mr. Speaker and Members, that this time in our country is like no other time in the history of the Republic. We owe foreign countries more money than we have ever owed them in the history of the Republic, some of the countries that we have concerns about, security concerns about. They have a part of the piece of the American pile because we have had an administration and a White House that has said we have got to give these tax cuts, even we can't even afford them, to individuals that are not even asking for them. And that strategy failed, because now we are in an economic downturn. And it ain't just about housing. It is the fact that jobs have not been created here. Jobs have been shipped overseas. And that seems to be the kind of global piece of saying, oh, we need to do that, because there is this importance that we have a strong global economy. I agree with that. But, at the same time, we have to have a strong America.

So as we look at what our veterans are going through and the more and more veterans that are going to be passed on because of some of the bad decisions that have been made in the past doesn't mean that we have to continue to make those bad decisions. It means that we should learn from those bad decisions, and then have the kind of paradigm shift that Democrats, Republicans, and Independents are looking for.

So, I feel that as we continue to look at our time here in Congress, as we continue to look at our responsibility, we have to take every living moment to make sure that we bring about that change.

When I first got here, we used to talk about not leaving the responsibility on our children and grandchildren. Now, we can say not leaving the responsibility on ourselves. There was a time we thought that the debt, folks would, our children will have to bear the responsibility of our bad decisions or inaction or lack of action. And now, it is about those of us today bearing the brunt of the bad decisions that were made in the past and decisions that are being made today by some Members of Congress. Luckily, we have this new direction Congress that are here to stand up on behalf of the American people and not the special interests.

So I say that, Mr. Speaker. In the light of saying that, I hope, and I want to commend some of my friends on the Republican side that have saw the light, that have gone to the wizard, that have asked for courage and they have stepped out and they voted with Members on the majority side to bring about the kind of paradigm shift. But there are some that are here that are not willing to do that. And that is fine.

Because, as far as I am concerned, the American people spoke in the last election, and that is the reason why I can say I am a member of the majority now.

And, guess what. Some of them were Republicans that were very frustrated with the fact that fiscal responsibility was not carried out, that decisions that should have been made as relates to the war in Iraq were not made, that the economy was going south, that they didn't have what they used to have in their bank accounts and investment in their family and their bloodline and no longer had it, so they had to bring about the kind of change. The American spirit will rise beyond partisan politics every time when this country is in jeopardy.

So when we come around to the next election, Mr. Speaker and Members, I want you to reflect on that individual that is going to go on a given Tuesday to vote for the kind of representation that he or she expects to have. And if they don't see when they look at the report card, because we have four 24-hour channels that are dedicated to news or close to the news, we have public television that is dedicated, gavel-to-gavel coverage of county commission and city commission and State legislators and also here in Congress, dedicated for the American people to take an opportunity to take a look at it. We have our cyber space that is available.

We used to have, Mr. Speaker, a digital divide in this country, so that when I was in the State legislature, it was thought, where would the DSL lines go? Where will the phone company allow those lines to be put on by the cable company? And now we have moved to the technology of Blackberries and I-phones and all of these things where individuals get news like that.

When the report card is mailed to the home or when they look at those, they go on-line or they look at television, they listen to the radio or they read the paper to find out, where were you standing on these very issues that are before Congress that are dealing with them, the foreclosure of their home, the economy, health care for children as we look at the SCHIP legislation which we call CHAMP here that provides for children with health care; as we look at what happened with oil subsidies, of bringing about alternative fuel to allow us to be able to invest in the Midwest versus the Middle East. When we start looking at biofuel that is, for instance, in my State, sugarcane that has already been extracted of its sugar, but the leftovers of that turn into fuel to run those sugar mills and to be able to go into tanks of Americans that are trying to make a living. We start looking at that. We start looking at why we are paying per gallon for fuel as we pay for a gallon of milk.

When we start looking at those issues, I think they are going to look

at and they are going to say, listen, I am an Independent, I am going to have to vote for the folks that are about the solution; I am a Republican, I am going to have to vote for the folks that are about the solution. In my house, I am a Democrat, I am going to have to vote for the folks that are willing to move this country in a new direction. And the evidence has spoken over the last 14 to 15 months that the new direction Congress has moved in that direction; and, that through the fact that we have been empowered by the American people to lead this country in a new direction, the President on bills that he said he would not sign had to sign because we kept that pressure on.

So I say all of this, Mr. Speaker, in closing that what we are facing right now are real issues. Our responsibility is great. Historians will write about this time in Congress. And I share with the Members, as a matter of fact I beg the Members to be on the right side of history and making the right decisions right now.

I will close with the information that I received as of April 3 as it reflects in Iraq: 4,011 Americans that have died in the line of duty; total number wounded in action and returned to duty 16,364; total number of wounded in action and have not returned to duty is 13,264.

As we break for the next couple of days and over the weekend, come back hopefully with the heart and the mind to be about the solution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it has been a long week. We have had a pretty tough legislative day today. It is springtime in Washington. Springtime brings lots of different groups to town; we saw farmers this week, we saw the firefighters, first responders this week, FEMA personnel this week. We also saw some of my friends at the American Medical Association this week, many of my friends from the Texas Medical Association. They came to Capitol Hill to discuss things that are important to them in health care. And, as I frequently do at the end of the day, I thought I would come down here and talk a little bit about health care. I like to call these little visits house calls.

Now, prior to coming to Congress I was a practicing physician. I am still licensed; I am not insured. But in honor of my fellow physicians who are here in town this week, I brought a picture of a famous doctor. No, he is not a medical doctor; he is a physicist. This is Dr. Albert Einstein. But I thought we would have Dr. Einstein accompany me on this house call this afternoon. It is going to be a little talk

about the role of healers, the role of physicians, the roles that perhaps they should play in health care reform in America.

Now, Dr. Einstein did a lot of famous things. He did some things that were infamous as well. He is well known for a number of quotes, and one of my favorite quotes from Dr. Albert Einstein is, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result this time." Of course, Dr. Einstein was right. And I wanted him to be with us today because that quote is a terrific theme for a little talk about how doctors and policymakers can together work on the things that should dictate health care reform in this country. So if you would, let's have a candid conversation about health care, health care at the Federal level, health care at the provider level.

Now, this is an election year in this country, a Presidential election year. It happens every 4 years. There is a lot of big discussions, there is a lot of big debates, and health care will be one of those big debates. There is a broad national recognition that reform is needed in health care. There is not a lot of consensus on how to achieve that.

Now, every one of the Presidential candidates, those who are still active in the race, those who were active in the race and have since dropped out, everyone has or had their own ideas. It won't surprise anyone here to know that Members of Congress also have their own ideas.

□ 1445

Policymakers are focused on change. That is good. That is appropriate. And as we learned this week from visits from doctors of the American Medical Association, physicians are focused on change as well. And they must be because, after all, in this country health care begins and ends with doctors.

Without our doctors, there is no health care. That means our doctor friends, the ones who are in town this week, have to be ones who take an active role in the process of transforming health care in this country. We need them to take a leading role in creating the road map on reasonable reform, to go from where we are now to where we ought to be.

We depend upon our physician leaders because they are leaders and are proactive. They are not reactive. Think about it for a minute. When you are only in a reactive mode, what you end up with are basically band-aid solutions. You think about the term death by a thousand cuts, we can call this death by a thousand scalpels because we were talking to doctors all week.

You know, refusing to do something about liability laws in this country, putting the interest of trial lawyers ahead of patients, that is a cut. Let me give you an example.

My home State of Texas, September 2003, we enacted sweeping liability reform as it affected the health care in-

dustry. We got fair medical justice legislation out of our State legislature. It required a constitutional amendment to go into effect, but it did pass under a vote of the people. As a consequence, now some 4 or 5 years later, Texas is seeing the benefits from passing commonsense legislation that limited the amount of payouts for noneconomic damages in medical liability cases.

Because this Texas law has made such a difference in Texas, and let me give you an example, in 2002, the year I first ran for Congress in Texas, the number of medical liability insurers in Texas had dwindled from 17 down to two. You don't get much in the way of competitive bidding when you only have two insurance companies that are willing to write your business. But all the rest had left. The climate in Texas was so hostile that no one wanted to write insurance in Texas.

As a consequence, you had good doctors who were simply unable to get insurance and stopped practicing. I met a young woman during one of the stops I made during my campaign in 2002 who was a radiologist, an interventional radiologist, highly trained, highly specialized, trained by the State of Texas, State-supported schools, so the taxpayers of Texas had paid for a portion of her education. And now 4, 5 years out in practice, she lost her liability insurance and was not able to get another carrier to pick her up. It was too risky. She couldn't practice without it, and she became a full-time mom, no longer practicing interventional radiology at a time I would argue when our health care needs are doing nothing but increasing.

That was wrong, and the State legislature in Texas recognized that was wrong and got busy and changed it. They didn't come up with a new idea, they copied an old idea.

In 1974, the State of California passed a sweeping set of medical liability changes called the Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act of 1974. And with those caps on noneconomic damages, they were able to tamp down the premium increases that doctors had seen over time. And, indeed, when we passed that legislation in Texas, we have seen the same result. It does work and it should be tried in more areas.

In fact, I have introduced legislation similar to the Texas legislation in the House of Representatives, H.R. 3509. This bill actually scores as a saving by the Congressional Budget Office. We are in our budget time in the springtime here in Washington. We are scraping around for every dollar we can find to pay for Federal programs. Here is a gift I will give to Congress. It is a \$5 billion gift this bill would save over 5 years as estimated under the Congressional Budget Office, and it does the same things on a national scale as the Texas legislature was able to deliver for their patients back home in Texas.

One of the unintended beneficiaries of this whole process was the small,

community-based hospital. The small, not-for-profit community hospital had to hold many hundreds of thousands, millions of dollars in escrow against a potential bad outcome, a bad event in a liability case. They have been able to back down those holdings and invest that money in just the things you want your community hospital to invest in, like nurses and capital investment. The result has been an expansion of medical care in Texas.

Since that bill was passed, we had gone down to two medical liability insurers. We are now back up in excess of 20, and they have come back into the State without an increase in fees.

My old insurer of record, Texas Medical Liability Trust, has reduced its liability premiums 22 percent in the aggregate since the passage of this law in 2003. Clearly it works.

Remember, our Founding Fathers said that the States should act as great laboratories for the Nation, and things that work in States should be considered for use countrywide. And, indeed, this is one of the concepts that embodies that.

The principles here on the chart are pretty straightforward. It does cap noneconomic damages in a medical liability suit, \$250,000 per physician, \$250,000 for the hospital, \$250,000 for a second hospital or a nursing home if one is involved. It does allow for some periodic payment, and it allows for good Samaritan care. Very sensible, straightforward legislation. It is not a complicated bill, and it behaves as advertised. And that is one of the things in this Congress, we just heard a gentleman talking about solutions. Here is a solution. I offer it as a gift to the United States House of Representatives. It saves \$5 billion over the next 5 years. Use that money somewhere else because in a \$3 trillion budget, there are plenty of places you can spend money.

Another place where we apply just a band-aid where we really need to do something major is in how we reimburse physicians for taking care of Medicare patients. They are taking care of our Medicare patients. Medicare is one of the largest deliverers of health care in the country, indeed the world. We have asked doctors to take care of our Medicare patients. They are some of our most complex patients. They have multiple conditions, multiple diseases, frequently on multiple medications, and we have asked the medical community since 1965 to provide care for these patients.

What do we do in return? We passed legislation a number of years ago that reduces year over year the amount we reimburse for that care. That doesn't make any sense. Can you imagine a doctor, a small businessman, going to his banker with a business plan. He says I am going to expand my business and I have this business plan, and part of the business plan is I am going to make 10 percent less every year, year over year as far as the eye can see.

Well, even back in the subprime days, no banker is going to make a loan on that type of business plan. How do we expect physicians across the country who are small business owners, how do we expect them to survive? And they certainly cannot thrive in that kind of an environment.

We do this because we have created a condition called the sustainable growth rate formula. I have put it up on this poster, and I am not going to go through this line by line. It is available on the Website of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. But just to demonstrate the complexity of this formula and to point out that going through all of these calculations, the final line in this formula is that you go back to 1996 and capture all of the money that you should have saved and add it on at the end. It is a formula that is destined to fail over time. Until we in Congress recognize that this formula is destined to fail over time, repeal it, reverse it, revise it, get rid of it, stop the cuts, pay the doctors what they are owed, and get on with things.

Currently in this country, we have Medicare divided into four parts. Each part is supposed to be an integrated member of the whole. We have Parts A, B, C and D. Part A deals with hospitalizations; Part B compensates physicians; Part C is Medicare HMOs; and Part D is drugs.

Every part of Medicare with the exception of the physician payment receives a cost-of-living adjustment year over year. Part B is different. It is governed under the sustainable growth rate formula. So a hospital will receive ever-increasing amounts of compensation because the cost of inputs increases, because a drug company or HMO will receive an upgrade every year, year over year because the cost of doing business increases, physician reimbursement will decline over time. Clearly, that is unsustainable.

I have a real problem here in Congress. I show this formula to any Member of the House of Representatives, although they recognize that patient access is a problem, physicians are in peril, although they recognize those features, this is very difficult to understand. This quickly goes into the "too-hard box" in someone's mind, and we are just not going to deal with it. But Congress must deal with this.

An example of how we don't deal with it, last December we were right up against a deadline. Cuts were going to go into effect on January 1, so at the last minute we came to this House and we passed a bill that would delay these cuts by 6 months. What an insult to the practicing physicians in America. What an insult that this was all the time we would expend on this very important issue that affects virtually every aspect of their practice life.

I say that because it is not just the Medicare reimbursement that is affected, but literally every private insurance company in this country pegs to Medicare. And so if Medicare does a

5 percent or 10 percent cut, guess what happens to Blue Cross/Blue Shield, United, on down the line. They will follow suit. Can't blame them for doing so, it is the market price. But as a consequence, this House of Representatives, this Congress, exerts wage and price controls over health care in this country that most of us here don't really have an understanding of.

So last December we passed a 6-month delay on phasing in the Medicare cuts. We have to deal with that before the end of June. It is the first of April. Half of that time has been consumed. Half of that time has been squandered, and have we seen any meaningful effort in my committee, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, which has jurisdiction over Part B in Medicare? No, we haven't. We did steroid hearings, for crying out loud, on baseball players. This is the work we should be doing.

We heard the other gentleman talk about solutions. Here is a solution we could wrap up and give to patients in America, and they would be the better for it.

Now, one of the other things that happened in December which we didn't get done, and sometimes in a way it is a good thing that we don't get things done. We talk a lot about trying to bring the architecture and information technology in health care, to bring it on up into the 21st century. It is a difficult concept for a lot of people to understand. It is difficult for some people to understand why we don't just flip a switch and turn on a computer and make it happen.

One of the bills that we saw come to Congress last December which didn't get passed was a bill that was going to mandate that physicians in the Medicare program use electronic prescribing.

Conceptually, it is a good idea. I am a physician. I am left-handed and have bad handwriting. Every year older I get, my handwriting doesn't get any clearer. So e-prescribing will remove some of those problems. And yes, it could reduce error rates. And yes, it will immediately flag things like medicines that are in conflict with each other and allergies that a patient has.

So it is a good concept, but what do we do with it here in Congress? We make it punitive. We come to the medical community and say here is our grand plan for e-prescribing. First of all, we give you \$2,000 to invest in the infrastructure. Two thousand dollars; \$2,000, do you have any idea how much these programs cost and how much it costs to buy the infrastructure and do the training? It is far in excess of \$2,000. In addition to that, if you do this e-prescribing program, we are going to give you a 1 percent bonus over time for doing this program. But if you haven't done it in 4 years' time, we are going to come back with a \$10 penalty for every patient that you see.

Well, a 1 percent bonus, that is better than nothing, but think about it for a

moment. In my practice if I saw a Medicare patient, return visit, moderately complex, on a good day, if that was a \$50 visit, they reimbursed \$50, that would be a miracle in itself. But let's do it that way because it makes the math easy and I'm not good at math. So a \$50 patient visit. And if I am really moving and if I am really on my game, I can see four of those patients in an hour. So that is a \$200 hour that I have put in in the clinic that morning. And we are going to get a 1 percent bonus for that. So for each of those four patients I saw in that hour, I am going to get an extra 50 cents. That is a \$2 an hour increase. Well, that is not a lot when you think about all of the extra work that goes into maintaining and training for these e-prescribing programs.

□ 1500

But what if I don't do it, what's going to happen then? In 4 years' time, we're going to come back with a 10 percent reduction. What does that 10 percent reduction mean to that same hour of intensity, that same hour of work applied 4 years later? Well, a 10 percent reduction, instead of now a \$2 increase, I get a \$20 penalty for seeing those four patients but not using e-prescribing.

If you couple that on top of the program, 10 percent cuts that are supposed to go in year after year, is it any wonder that when you pick up a phone and try to make a new patient appointment in a doctor's office, they say, I'm sorry, we're full, I'm sorry, we're not taking any new Medicare patients. And this is becoming a crisis for our seniors all because Congress will not do the work for our physician community and for our patients. And it's work we've asked our physicians to do. Since 1965, we have asked them to participate in this program.

But let's stay on the concept of information technology for just a moment. And I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I haven't always been a big fan of some of the advanced and higher information technology, electronic medical records. Yeah, those were good for someone else, maybe not for me. E-prescribing, I did it with a couple different vendors in my private practice. It never was all that it was cracked up to be. But in August of 2005, late August of 2005, I changed my mind on this subject. And I changed my mind on this subject because of a very harsh event that happened in America, and that was the passage of Hurricane Katrina over the City of New Orleans.

And we all know the story there, the multiple breaches in the levees and the city flooded. And one of the consequences of that city flooding was the flooding of one of the venerable old health care institutions in this country, Charity Hospital in New Orleans. The basement was flooded for weeks. Guess what we have in our basements of our hospitals around the country? That's where we put our records. That's where we store these paper records.

So, here is a visit. In January of 2006, we did a field hearing on one of my subcommittees on Energy and Commerce. We went down into the basement of Charity Hospital in New Orleans. The room had been dewatered. Prior to that visit, I didn't even know "dewatered" was a verb. The room had been dewatered, and here is the medical records department.

Now, this black stuff that you see smudged on the charts, and these are rows and rows of medical charts, you can see the identifying patient numbers on the end, this black material smudged on the charts is not soot from a fire, it's black mold. That means that anyone who comes in here and pulls a record off the shelf is going to get a lung full of mold spores. And clearly, because of that hazardous condition, these records will never be accessed again. And of course you can imagine, this room was under water for weeks and weeks and weeks. The effect of salt water, brackish water on the ink that went to record these medical events, these records were likely unreadable even if someone had been willing to hazard the mold spores to pull one off the shelf. So, all of this data is lost forever.

And we don't know what's in there. Perhaps a kidney transplant, perhaps a premature birth, perhaps just a well-baby check. Absolutely impossible to tell. This was so critical because when many of the people who left New Orleans after that storm, after the difficulties that were encountered in the aftermath, a lot of those individuals came to Dallas, Texas and they arrived on the parking lot at Reunion Arena, where they were to be triaged to receive health care if they needed, housing, start to get their lives back on track. There were many people who arrived there who actually had significant medical conditions. And it was very, very difficult to obviously go back and access these records that were, in effect, under water in the City of New Orleans.

Now, there were some big chain pharmacies who arrived on the scene with a mobile truck. And using the information that they could download off their central computer system, from a patient's name and birth date they were able to recreate medicine lists. And I will just tell you, if you can get an accurate medicine list on a patient, a lot of times you can know a great deal about their medical history given the types of medications they were on. Or, if nothing else, here was verification that this was the anti-hypertensive that this patient needed, this was the type of diabetes medication that this patient was on. It accelerated care for these patients in an unbelievable fashion.

And these two series of events made me a believer in electronic medical records. If you have an electronic medical record that stays with the patient, that follows the patient throughout life, that can be accessed by the pa-

tient, be accessed by that patient's physician if the patient gives permission. If you have that capability, that would have gone a long way towards the rapid reinstitution of medical care. For some patients who are, frankly, quite ill, not just because their underlying medical condition made them ill, but they were ill from spending several days in water up to their waists, or in the Superdome where they lacked air conditioning or lacked access to some of the most basic facilities for hygiene, these were patients in distress because of their medical condition and because of the conditions in which they had existed after the storm.

So, how much better was it to be able to resume their care because there was the availability of at least a small amount of data that could be retrieved electronically. If a patient had their own medical record over which they had control, much, much more facile to be able to treat those patients in that type of situation.

Now, we do hear a lot, here in Congress there are various bills and ideas out there, as far as how to get the health care community up to speed on electronic medical records or health information technology, as you frequently hear it referred to here in Congress. There was a big study done a few years ago by the RAND people. And in this study they talk about the billions of dollars, \$77 billion, that can be saved over 15 years if we go to an electronic medical record model. Now, that's a significant amount of money. And the study is a very meaningful one, very well thought out, very well constructed. Most people don't go much more deeply into it than that, but if you actually take the trouble to read the RAND study, if you look into it, most of those savings actually occur on up towards that 15th year of that study.

Most of the investment in information architecture is going to be done on an individual basis and wasn't included in the cost or the benefit of the RAND study, so it skews the figure a little bit on the plus side because of that; no allowance for training, no allowance for maintenance. But, nevertheless, still they do show a significant savings available by going to electronic medical records.

Their sum-up paragraph, the very last paragraph of the study, they say for this world to go away and the electronic world to occur, it is going to take incentives. And they talk about incentives that they must begin early, that is, you want to be sure and make that incentive available so that you don't penalize someone for getting in early, or more importantly, you don't reward a late adopter. So, the incentives have to be available early. And the time limit that the incentives are available, the time frames that the incentives are available have to be limited.

But the final point, and the one that is always missed on the floor of this

Congress, is the incentives must be substantial. I would submit to you that a 1 percent increase in a Medicare patient's compensation for an office visit for using e-prescribing does not fall into the category of a substantial benefit. And then, as we so often do here in Congress, we go on to add insult to injury by saying, if you don't do it, we're going to punish you. Here's a little carrot, but a big stick if you don't do what we've asked you to do.

So, I do think that the day will come when we will see a great deal more adoption of electronic medical records. Some of the things I think we could do are: encourage the private sector, that is really light-years ahead of the Federal Government on this, perhaps with a little relaxation of some regulatory regimens called the Stark provisions, perhaps with at least some definition of what privacy is and what privacy means so people have some certainty about the systems that they're developing. Maybe a little bit on the liability side. And true enough, ask something from the private sector in return. If it's an insurance company that's developing this model, make certain that the information itself is owned by the patient and may travel with the patient if they transition from one company to another, or if they transition from one employer and they go to individually owned insurance, make certain that that information is not lost in that transaction and the patient can control the information.

But I do believe if we put some of our partisan differences aside, we could devise a scenario that would be conducive to the development of this type of technology. And again, as the gentleman who was talking before me kept talking about solutions, these are the types of solutions that the American people want to see us working on. Again, they're not really interested if we hold another hearing about steroids in baseball. They are interested if we can provide them this type of value in their doctor/patient interactions.

Now, one of the other concerns that I have when you hear people talk about health care, and certainly when you hear people talk about it at the national scale, is, well, why don't we expand the Medicare program. Please be advised, in my opinion, the Medicare program, for all the good things that it does do, has enough areas of uncertainty around it that, number one, I don't think it is the type of program in which we want to be placing everyone.

But going back to the SGR formula, I spent probably 40 to 60 percent of my week dealing with problems that are brought about by difficulties administered through Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP, all of the Federal systems that we have to provide health care in this country. We are not doing a great job.

So, at this point, I don't see the value in rewarding the Federal Government by giving it a greater and greater share of health care in this country. And I would simply ask the question,

does the private sector have a role to play in the delivery of health care in the United States of America? My answer to the question is yes. And, in fact, a long hearing that we had today dealing with Medicaid funding, if you do not have the private sector, you have no way to pay for Medicare and Medicaid because, let's be honest, Medicare and Medicaid do not pay the full cost of the care that's rendered. Hospitals, physicians and clinics across the country have to cross-subsidize their Medicare and Medicaid populations with money from their private practices, with money that they receive from the private sector.

So, I would submit that the private sector does have a role to play in the delivery of health care in this country because, at the very least, right now we depend upon the excess payment from the private sector to fund the cross-subsidization for Medicare and Medicaid.

One last thing about the physician's compensation let me talk about, because I've been very critical of the way the current majority, the current leadership handled the Medicare reimbursement at the end of 2007, but I must say at the end of 2006, when my side was in charge, we didn't do a great deal better.

We decided to provide a 1-1.5 percent increase in physician compensation if doctors were willing to undergo some quality reporting. Now, quality reporting generally would be thought of as a good thing, but again, the incentive was so low as to not cover the cost of collecting the data. And now, after the first year and a half of this initiative called the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative, started out life as PVRP, and then became PQRI, the results are pretty disappointing. Not that quality wasn't there, the results are disappointing because it wasn't worth the time of the doctors and clinics around the country to participate in the program. Almost 90,000 physicians across the country could have participated in a reporting program for asthma patients, but, in fact, less than 100 did.

Again, if incentives are going to work, if incentives are going to be worthwhile, they have to be meaningful. If you provide a meaningless incentive, then the person who is to receive the incentive says, this is information you really don't value, so I'll tell you what, I'm not going to bother with it, it's not worth it to me.

Incentives will work; they will work if they're meaningful, they will work if they start early, they will work if they're time limited, but they must, above all else, they must be substantial.

Now, again, I referenced earlier that a physician's office is nothing more than a small business. They need the resources to pay the overhead. We heard a very moving story today in committee of a pediatrician who practiced in Alabama. Her patient population was 70 percent Medicaid, and she

had reached the point in her practice where she wasn't covering overhead any longer; she had to borrow from her savings in order to keep her practice open. And from what she described to us, it sounded as if she had done all the things she could do to hold costs down in her practice, extended hours, hired physician extenders, she had a physician's assistant working with her. But the reality is, because the payment for Medicaid patients is so low for physicians, the result is, if they don't have a sufficient private population, again, to bring those earnings up, they're not going to make it. So, a practice that is 70 percent Medicaid in rural Alabama apparently can't make it paying the overhead and trying to keep the doors open for, again, the very critically ill patients, the disadvantaged patients, the patients that we in Congress have asked this doctor to take care of.

It is disappointing, to say the least, it's a travesty, it's a tragedy, that a doctor in that situation will only be able to keep that up so long. There are only so many nights you can go home and explain to your family that, once again, you had to raid the retirement savings or raid the children's college fund simply to pay for operational expenses to keep the office open, because if you were doing that, bear in mind, that physician is not drawing a paycheck for those months either.

So, it's difficult for doctors to build their businesses. It's difficult for doctors to pay their bills when the very policies developed on the floor of this House are so detrimental to the practice of medicine.

□ 1515

And if we can continue to accept these types of Band-Aid solutions in liability, in Medicare, in Medicaid, if we continue to accept those Band-Aid solutions, just like Dr. Einstein said, we're going to get the same results, or worse.

Doctors are leaving Medicare as a result of some of the activities taken on by this country. It is time, it is time for this Congress to step up and do something new, try something new. I mean, 435 leaders, elected by their respective constituents across the country; 435 leaders, we need to lead.

We need to do the hard work, take a short-term, a mid-term and a long-term approach to these problems. And they're not insoluble. They're hard, to be sure. They're complex. They may require hours of work. They may require some hard bargaining and, at the end, they may require some compromise. But solutions are within our grasp.

But when we do stuff like a 6-month Medicare payment fix, we do more than harm the physicians who we've asked to take care of our Medicare patients. We do more than harm our seniors who now pick up the phone and can't find a doctor who will accept their Medicare. We actually harm the very credibility of this institution, and we undermine the credibility of this institution when

we take such short-sighted approaches to very significant national problems. And the American people, correctly, stand back and say, what's going on?

And so is it any wonder that approval ratings of Congress are at historic all time lows?

Well, to be certain, there are health care policy reform questions and goals that, over time, and with some thoughtful deliberation, can result in successes. But we're going to have some big questions we have to answer.

And that's one of the fortunate things about being in the middle of an election year because these things now get elevated to a national forum; there's a national referendum, if you will, about the future of health care.

We'll have really, I expect, some fairly different choices out there to make. We'll have to ask ourselves, how are we going to go through these changes and continue to value that interaction that takes place between the doctor and the patient in the treatment room? After all, that's the fundamental unit of production that occurs in this big, vast machine that we call American medicine.

So how do we keep that relationship sacred? And what do we do that delivers value to that relationship?

We're going to hear a lot of talk about mandates. We already have. We hear people talk about individual mandates, where every individual is required to buy health insurance. We hear things about employer mandates, where every employer is required to have health insurance.

Do mandates work? Are they a good thing? Will they work in a free society? How do you force everyone to do what you think is a good idea and ought to be done?

Well, it turns out it can be terribly difficult to do that, and the history of mandates is sketchy, to say the least.

A very good article in *Health Affairs*, a magazine or periodical called *Health Affairs* last November, the title was *Consider It Done*, talking about mandates. We're there; we've reached the promised land and we're going to have mandates to require health insurance.

But even in that article, as they go through the history of mandates in this country, certainly raises some valuable questions about whether or not mandates will ultimately work.

And going back into the 1960s, there was the helmet law brought to motorcycle riders by this United States Congress. And the outcry was so severe when Members of Congress went home from their constituents who were part of the motorcycle riding community that they very quickly came back and said, well, that's a State's issue. We're going to repeal that at the national level and, Mr. State Legislator, you're going to have to deal with that; Governor, you'll have to deal with that as a problem, and States have over the intervening 40 years. Some States, my home State of Texas does not require a helmet. Some States do. But Congress

very quickly found out that mandates can have some negative consequences.

Well, can you get 100 percent compliance with a mandate? Some people argued that if the penalty for not complying is severe enough and well-known enough, that you will, indeed, get near that 100 percent compliance. But think about it for a minute.

We're just a few weeks away from April 15. We've all got to pay our income taxes. There's a mandate. Everyone is aware of the income tax law in this country. Everyone is aware of the Internal Revenue Service. Everyone is aware, they may not be aware of the specific penalties, but if they know that they don't do what they're supposed to do there is a very swift and sure penalty out there awaiting them from the Internal Revenue Service. And all of us know the story of Al Capone, who was arrested not for being a bootlegger and doing bad things to people, but arrested because he did not pay his income taxes.

So you would think, with the mandate for paying Federal income taxes, that there would be near 100 percent compliance. But the reality is you get about 85 percent compliance. You get about 15 percent of people who decide not to follow the rules with the Internal Revenue Service.

In fact, you'll hear us talk about it on the House floor, especially this time of year when taxes are due and we're talking about budgets and we're looking for more money. People on the floor of the House will talk about the tax gap, that is \$300 billion, and if we had that \$300 billion we could do good and great things for the country. We have the tax gap because we have 15 percent of the people in this country who are willing to look at the penalties for not filing their income tax and say, you know what? I'm not going to file my income tax.

How many people do we have this country without health insurance? A lot. It's about 15 percent of the population. We have 300 million people in this country, give or take, probably more than that now. That figure's a couple of years old. And how many people do we have without health insurance? People argue about the number, but around 45 million, and that's about 15 percent of what our population is in this country.

We already have that compliance, even without mandates. So are mandates going to take us to a higher level of compliance?

And what do we give up in terms of freedom if we go down the road of mandates?

But to me, more importantly, what's the flip side to mandates? If you're not going to have mandates, okay, well how are you going to get people to recognize that they should have health insurance?

Well, one thing you can do is work on the affordability side because it's no question, if the bills get too high the employer's going to say I'm not going

to provide insurance for my employees any longer because it becomes cost prohibitive. And if an individual looks at the individual market and says the cost is so high I'm not going to comply with it. So certainly the affordability side is a big part of the equation.

But more importantly, it's creating problems that people want. It's creating programs that people recognize as delivering value back to their lives.

And we do have a little experience with this over the past 5 years. We did, in a number of Medicare reforms in 2003, provide Medicare Part D, a Medicare prescription drug benefit. And there were those in this House who argued that this should be something that is mandated by the Federal Government and completely controlled by the Federal Government.

There were others who argued that maybe it would be better to let companies compete with seniors for that business. And that was the argument that eventually prevailed. And as a consequence, we had, at the roll out of Medicare part D, we had complaints because there's too many choices; there's too many companies out there that are offering this, and I can't make up my mind. The cost ranges from \$10 a month to \$50 a month, and how in the world am I ever going to know what I'm supposed to do?

But after some of the louder rhetoric died down and people began to look at these programs, indeed, these were programs that delivered value to a segment of the population who had never had an affordable prescription drug benefit available to them before and, as a consequence, the penetration with this benefit is extremely high in the Medicare population. And the overall satisfaction rate is also extremely high.

So that's perhaps a model for us to consider when we talk about things about how do we provide insurance. We tell everybody you've got to have it, but there are going to be some people who just won't do it. We make programs that are affordable and that appeal to people, that people want. People want to be able to provide protection for their families. They want to be able to provide additional help if health care is needed in their families. So that would be another way to approach.

One of the great privileges of serving in the United States House of Representatives, you occasionally get to go places or meet people that you otherwise may not have gotten to meet. And for me that hour came last fall when I had the opportunity to spend an hour with one of my heroes, Dr. Michael DeBakey down in Houston. Many people know Dr. DeBakey as a famous heart surgeon. He was also the individual who developed the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital that has been responsible for the saving of so many lives in our Nation's conflicts over the last 50 years. Dr. DeBakey himself is going to turn 100 years old this year, so it was a

phenomenal ability to talk with an individual who has witnessed and lived through and directed the last century of medicine.

And many of the comments Dr. DeBakey made to me were similar to the same things that I wrestle with; how do you provide mandates? How do you require mandates in a free society? Wouldn't it be better to give people things, make available to people things that they would want and would willingly sign up for, rather than forcing them into individual programs that really might not appeal to them?

One of the other things that Dr. DeBakey said to me that gives me, really gives me a lot of hope, really gives me a lot of optimism in looking forward to the future, because he said, Congress can do this. Congress is up to this task. And he said he knew that because when he was a young man, having just graduated from LSU, I'm sorry, graduated from Tulane down in New Orleans, Louisiana, as a young man, after graduating from medical school he had to go to Europe in order to get the credentials in order to be a research physician. Those credentials were not available to him at American institutions, so he went to France and Germany and did his study there in order to get the credentials to be seen as a credible researcher.

But that changed in the 1940s, and it changed because of the efforts of Congress in funding research at the National Institutes of Health, and developing the types of programs that now allow America to be at the forefront of research across the globe. And scientists come here to train, come here to get those credentials, those same credentials that Dr. DeBakey had to cross the ocean to receive a half century ago.

So he told me, Congress can do this and I know Congress can do this because they've done it in the past. They've tackled big things and they've come to the right conclusion.

Well, I pray that he's right. I wouldn't be here if I didn't believe that he was right. But it is going to be difficult to do that.

Now, I can't make all of these things happen by myself. And one of the reasons you're in Congress is because you want to work with others. Well, maybe that's not the reason you're in Congress. But nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, you're in Congress and you do work with others, as is the nature of this body. There's 434 other individuals who have to be consulted, whose vote has to be one before you're going to be able to see your policies become law.

So I will just tell you one of the things I've learned. You can have the best ideas in the world, and you can have all of the enthusiasm and all of the energy required to get those things over the line, but if you don't have people working with you, if you don't have people helping you, it's going to be very difficult to get those things done.

So I am very grateful, with the legislation that I have, to help reform the

Medicare payment formula, the bill Number 5545, I do have help. I've got help now over in the Senate. I've got help from the doctors in the American Medical Association. And very important to me, I've got help from my doctors with the Texas Medical Association. And I think together we can get this work done.

There's not a Member of Congress that I've talked to when I've asked them how things are going with their doctors back home who doesn't bring up the problems that their doctors bring in to them about the Medicare payment formula. So the groundwork has been done, and now it's up to us in this Congress to get that accomplished.

And a little preventive medicine will go a long way, will go a long way in fixing some of these problems.

And if you know that two trains are coming at each other down the track and it looks like tragedy's inevitable, what do you do? What does this responsible person do? Do they run down to the track and see if they can find the appropriate switch, or warn somebody off to avert the disaster? Or do you run home and get your video camera so you'll be the first one to get it up on YouTube? I would submit the responsible thing to do is to try to avert the disaster, and not simply document its destructive events.

Mr. Speaker, as our time draws short and this week is going to draw to a close, let me just reflect on a couple of things from the last century of medicine. The last century of medicine I do feel I have some interest in, some ability to talk about that. My father was a physician. His father before him was a physician, so between the three of us, we pretty much occupied the last century in the delivery of health care.

And over the last century, we saw some incredibly transformative things occur within the science of medicine, and we saw some incredibly transformative things occur at the social level, at the legislative level.

□ 1530

And you think back to what the state of medicine was coming into at the end of the first decade of the last century, what things were like coming up to 1910, medical schools across the country where the curricula was so varied. There was no standardization. The graduate of one medical school could be well-trained and the graduate of another medical school could be woefully inadequate.

We were right upon the time of intense scientific discovery: Anesthesia was coming into its own, the ability to administer a blood transfusion, the knowledge about blood blanking was coming into its own. Immunizations, the whole science of immunology was just coming upon the scene. And at the same time, from Congress, a group of individuals were convened called the Flexner Commission. They came up with a report called the Flexner Report which called for the standardization of

medical school curricula across the country, and that stabilization of medical school curricula allowed for the stable platform on which those scientific discoveries could be based and set the stage for some of the great scientific breakthroughs that were yet to come.

And right around the corner, some 30 years later, we were engaged in the activities of the second world war. A scientist in great Britain had found an odd thing had happened when he grew a mold in a petri dish and it inhibited the growth of bacteria. And he had discovered Penicillin. That was 1928. But that was a little more than a laboratory curiosity. There wasn't really anything you could do with it on a commercial basis. There certainly wasn't any patient application for this until American scientists discovered in the 1940s how to produce this on a mass scale, the cost came way down, and the first antibiotic became commercially available, and relatively cheaply, to large numbers of people.

It changed the course of things in the second world war. This happened right before D-Day. And think of the life and limb that was saved by the ability to fight infection reliably for the first time with a chemotherapeutic agent.

Also, around the same time, cortisone had been discovered earlier, but cortisone was one of those things that was very rare, very difficult to get. You obtained it at the slaughter house. Very, very labor intensive. A Ph.D. chemist, a gentleman that we honored in this House last Congress, Percy Julian, an African American scientist, found a way to extract cortisone from soy beans. Well, that changed the course. Suddenly this very potent anti-inflammatory agent became readily available in large quantities at a relatively low cost.

On the social side in the 1940s, we saw some big changes in the practice of medicine because we were in the middle of the Second World War. President Roosevelt wanted to keep down trouble from inflation so he put wage and price controls in place across the land. Employers wanted to keep the few employees who were still able to work for them. They wanted to keep them coming to work. So they said, can we provide benefits to our employees since we can't raise their wages? Can we provide them benefits?

The Supreme Court ruled that, indeed, did not violate the spirit of the wage and price controls. Those benefits could be given to individuals and, oh, by the way, they could be given with pre-tax dollars. And that set the stage for employer-derived insurance, and some people would argue it has given us some of the difficulties that we now encounter 60 or 70 years later.

But nevertheless, in the 1940s we saw for the first time commercially available, large-scale quantities of antibiotics, anti-inflammatory and health insurance. And think about how the next several decades were changed.

In the 1960s, we saw similar changes. For the first time we saw reliable drugs to fight hypertension become available. Anti-psychotics became available. Antidepressants became available. And in the midst of all of that scientific change, there also occurred a big change in that this Congress, or this House of Representatives, passed a bill that we now know as the Medicare bill.

In 1965 when Medicare was enacted, for the first time the Federal Government had a large footprint in health care in this country, and, of course, it has grown significantly since that time in ways that probably most of the people who are on the floor of this House voted for that bill would never have imagined that it would spend in excess of \$300 billion a year, but that's where we find ourselves now.

Think of where we are now on just the beginning of the dawn of the 21st century. The human genome has been sequenced. You can go on line and find a place that, for a little less than a thousand dollars, will investigate your human genome, will tell you your risk factors for diseases like multiple sclerosis, heart disease, diabetes, even being overweight. It's phenomenal to have that information literally at our fingertips. When I was a resident at Parkland Hospital in the 1970s, I never would have imagined that that type of information would be available to people so cheaply and so easily. I never would have imagined that there was anything called the Internet, but nevertheless, that information that could be so easily accessed.

We are indeed at a transformative time in medicine in this country. I referenced information technology. Think of the speed of change of information technology, how things are progressing and evolving so rapidly that it really isn't reasonable to ask the Federal Government to keep up and moderate those changes. We need to depend on the private sector to do that because it's happening so fast.

But as medicine is transformative, Congress, by its very nature, can't be transformative. We are transactional. We take money from one group and we give it to the next. That's what we do. We collect the taxes, we spend the money. Congress is inherently a transactional body. But Dr. DeBakey said Congress can do this; Congress can participate in the transformation of delivering health care in this country.

Well, I thank Dr. DeBakey for his wise counsel. I thank the American Medical Association for being up here this week. It is not easy taking time away from their families and their practices and their practices to come here and interact with legislators such as myself and other Members on both sides of the aisle to help explain and help us understand some of the very complex issues that they face on a day-to-day basis, yes, dealing with sick people but also dealing with this vast morass of regulations and rules that we lay at their feet every year.

And most of all, I want the American people over this next year's time to focus on this grand debate that we are going to have at the national level. Your future is dependent upon it. Certainly your children's future and your children's children's future is dependent upon it.

Think of the Congress back in 1965. It enacted Medicare and had no idea what it would be like 40 years hence. The same things apply today. The decisions we make on the floor of this body today, 30 and 40 years from now are going to look decidedly different. And I would say help us to make the right kinds of decisions so that the American citizens, 30 and 40 years' time from now, will look back and say the 110th Congress stepped up and did the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a long week, and with that, I am going to yield back the balance of my time.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATSON, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PRICE of Georgia) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, April 10.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 10.

Mr. PENCE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois, for 5 minutes, April 8 and 9.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONAWAY, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, April 4, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5841. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received March 10, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

5842. A letter from the Director, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Mine Rescue Teams (RIN: 1219-AB53) received March 3, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

5843. A letter from the Deputy Director Office of Health Plan Standards and Compliance Assistance EBSA/USDOL, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Mental Health Parity (RIN: 1210-AA62) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

5844. A letter from the Deputy Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits — received March 3, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

5845. A letter from the General Counsel, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Final Rule: Standard for the Flammability (Open Flame) of Mattress Sets; Correction — received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5846. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Fitness For Duty Programs (RIN: 3150-AF12) received March 13, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5847. A letter from the Assistant Secretary Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment to the International Arms Traffic in Arms Regulations: Sri Lanka [Public Notice:] received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5848. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator For Regulatory Programs, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Gulf of Alaska; 2008 and 2009 Final Harvest Specifications for Groundfish [Docket No. 071106671-8010-02] (RIN: 0648-XD67) received March 13, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

5849. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery and Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Amendment 27/14; Correction [Docket No. 0612243157-7799-07] (RIN: 0648-AT87) received March 13, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

5850. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator For Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Groundfish, Crab, Scallop, and Salmon Fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No. 070711313-8014-02] (RIN: 0648-AV62) received March 5, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

5851. A letter from the Under Secretary and Director, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes in the Requirement for a Description of the Mark in Trademark Applications [Docket No. PTO-T-2007-0035] (RIN: 0651-

AC17) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5852. A letter from the Secretary of the Commission, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Revised Jurisdictional Thresholds for Section 7A of the Clayton Act — received March 5, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5853. A letter from the OGE Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting the Office's final rule — Post-Employment Conflict of Interest Restriction; Revision of Departmental Component Designations (RIN: 3209-AA14) received March 18, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

5854. A letter from the Acting Chief, Border Security Regulations Branch, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — ADDITION OF SAN ANTONIO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO LIST OF DESIGNATED LANDING LOCATIONS FOR CREAIN AIRCRAFT [USCBP-2007-0017 CBP Dec. 08-01] received March 5, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5855. A letter from the Acting Chief, Trade & Comm'l Regs. Branch, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — ADDITION OF LITHUANIA TO THE LIST OF NATIONS ENTITLED TO SPECIAL TONNAGE TAX EXEMPTION [CBP Dec. 08-02] received March 5, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5856. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Section 1035 (Also 72) (Rev. Proc. 2008-24) received March 14, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5857. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medicaid Program; Multiple Source Drug Definition [CMS-2238-IFC] (RIN: 0938-AP26) received March 14, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. CLAY (for himself and Mr. WAXMAN):

H.R. 5687. A bill to amend the Federal Advisory Committee Act to increase the transparency and accountability of Federal advisory committees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. WELLER (for himself and Mr. TIBERI):

H.R. 5688. A bill to provide for a program of targeted extended unemployment compensation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DOGGETT (for himself, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. ARCURI, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. GENE GREEN of

Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HARE, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HONDA, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KIND, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MATHESON, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. OLVER, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PLATTS, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. ROTHMAN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SESTAK, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SNYDER, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. STARK, Ms. SUTTON, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. TIERNEY, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Ms. WATERS, Ms. WATSON, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WEINER, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Mr. WU):

H.R. 5689. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and title 18, United States Code, to deter the smuggling of tobacco products into the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BERMAN (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. PAYNE, and Ms. LEE):

H.R. 5690. A bill to exempt the African National Congress from treatment as a terrorist organization for certain acts or events, provide relief for certain members of the African National Congress regarding admissibility, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. SHEA-PORTER:

H.R. 5691. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow an above-the-line deduction for State and local real property taxes on principal residences of taxpayers who elect not to deduct State and local income and general sales taxes, a refundable credit for the increased cost in 2008 of heating oil used to heat the principal residence of the taxpayer, and to increase and make permanent the deduction for qualified tuition and related expenses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. TAUSCHER (for herself, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. TOWNS):

H.R. 5692. A bill to provide for infant crib safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BOOZMAN:

H.R. 5693. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against

tax for volunteer firefighters; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BOOZMAN:

H.R. 5694. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a deduction for certain travel expenses of qualified emergency volunteers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida (for herself and Mr. BILBRAY):

H.R. 5695. A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require applications for voter registration with respect to elections for Federal office to include a statement that an alien who falsely claims to be a citizen of the United States is deportable under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, and Mr. BOUCHER):

H.R. 5696. A bill to make a technical correction to section 3009 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. STARK, Ms. WATSON, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. MCCOTTER, Ms. BERKLEY, Ms. LEE, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, and Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California):

H.R. 5697. A bill to prohibit the use of certain funds related to the 2008 Olympic Games in China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Mr. HOLT, and Mr. BURGESS):

H.R. 5698. A bill to amend titles XVI, XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Social Security Act to remove inmate limitations on Medicaid, Medicare, SSI, and SCHIP benefits for persons in custody pending disposition of charges; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HENSARLING (for himself, Mr. AKIN, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. CANNON, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Ms. FALLIN, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FORTUÑO, Ms. FOXX, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PENCE, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia):

H.R. 5699. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to protect uncompensated Internet activity by individuals from treatment as a contribution or expenditure under the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. HINCHEY (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. HOLT, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. McNULTY, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. GOODE, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ALTMIRE, and Mr. BISHOP of New York):

H.R. 5700. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a \$1,000 refundable

credit for individuals who are bona fide volunteer members of volunteer firefighting and emergency medical service organizations; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HOLDEN:

H.R. 5701. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Acetaminophen; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. KILDEE, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. FARR, Ms. DELAUNO, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. WU, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 5702. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to promote the use of advance directives, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:

H.R. 5703. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that elderly and disabled individuals receiving in-home care under certain government programs are not liable for the payment of employment taxes with respect to the providers of such care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:

H.R. 5704. A bill to ensure that home health agencies can assign the most appropriate skilled service to make the initial assessment visit for home health services for Medicare beneficiaries requiring rehabilitation therapy under a home health plan of care, based upon physician referral; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCDERMOTT (for himself and Mr. MARKEY):

H.R. 5705. A bill to establish a commission to study methods for improving and promoting bilateral renewable energy cooperation between the United States and India, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mrs. MYRICK:

H.R. 5706. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase penalties for employing illegal aliens; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. POMEROY (for himself and Mr. MORAN of Kansas):

H.R. 5707. A bill to provide incentives to physicians to practice in rural and medically underserved communities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida):

H.R. 5708. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Everglades National Park, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SPACE:

H.R. 5709. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out quality assurance activities with respect to the administration of disability compensation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico:

H.R. 5710. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water Authority for the planning, design, and construction of the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. WEINER:

H.R. 5711. A bill to amend part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish

a floor for payment for mammography under the Medicare Program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WELCH of Vermont (for himself, Mr. TOWNS, and Mr. WAXMAN):

H.R. 5712. A bill to require disclosure by Federal contractors of certain violations relating to the award or performance of Federal contracts; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. WOLF, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PITTS, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. ROHRABACHER, and Mr. WALSH of New York):

H. Res. 1075. A resolution condemning the Chinese Government's unwarranted violence against Tibetan protesters, the Chinese Government's use of Internet censorship and surveillance to control news of the protests, and urging compliance with Chinese criminal law and to provide information and access to all persons detained; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MCKEON (for himself, Mr. BOEHNER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. MARCHANT, Ms. FOXX, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. POE, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. PITTS, Mr. HAYES, Mr. AKIN, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. WAMP, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. FORBES, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. MCHENRY, Mrs. BONO MACK, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. HERGER, and Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California):

H. Res. 1076. A resolution calling upon the courts to uphold the fundamental and constitutional right of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. PELOSI (for herself, Mr. SEN-SENBRENNER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. INSLEE, Ms. SOLIS, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. HOLT):

H. Res. 1077. A resolution calling on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its crackdown in Tibet and enter into a substantive dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to find a negotiated solution that respects the distinctive language, culture, religious identity, and fundamental freedoms of all Tibetans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, and Mr. CLEAV-ER):

H. Res. 1078. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a Global Marshall Plan holds the potential to demonstrate the commitment of the United States to peace and prosperity; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. HINOJOSA (for himself and Mrs. BIGGERT):

H. Res. 1079. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month 2008, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WHITFIELD of Kentucky (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. WAMP, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. COOPER, Mr. GORDON, Mr. TANNER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. HAYES, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CONAWAY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. SESTAK, Mr. SNYDER, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. TERRY, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. BURGESS, Ms. FOXX, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. NUNES, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. LINDER):

H. Res. 1080. A resolution honoring the extraordinary service and exceptional sacrifice of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), known as the Screaming Eagles; to the Committee on Armed Services.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

241. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 243 memorializing the Congress of the United States to enact legislation to change the computation of state federal medical assistance percentage (FMAPS) by disregarding employer contributions to prefund retiree health care in calculating Medicaid; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

242. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Maine, relative to Senate Joint Resolution No. 845 memorializing the members of the Congress of the United States to act in the best interests of Maine citizens concerning Medicaid changes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

243. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois, relative to House Resolution No. 909 urging the Congress of the United States to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to make all its provisions permanent; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

244. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Alaska, relative to a Resolution urging the Congress of the United States to reauthorize federal, state, and local forensic DNA grants for DNA labs in Alaska; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

245. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Michigan, relative to Senate Resolution No. 86 memorializing the Congress of the United States to reject legislation that would preempt the authority of the Great Lakes states to curb the release of ballast water; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

246. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Maine, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 1563 memorializing the President of the United States, the Congress of the United States and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure funding for Veterans' healthcare; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

247. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Mississippi, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 565 requesting that the Congress of the United States extend the Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone Act of 2005; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

248. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, relative to House

Concurrent Resolution No. 7 memorializing the Congress of the United States to review and consider eliminating provisions of law which reduce social security benefits for those receiving benefits from federal, state, or local government retirement systems; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 190: Mr. EVERETT.
H.R. 192: Mr. GOODE.
H.R. 197: Mrs. BACHMANN.
H.R. 245: Mr. SHUSTER.
H.R. 333: Mr. HOLT, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Mr. PLATTS.
H.R. 351: Mr. RANGEL and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 406: Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. DICKS, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Ms. WATSON, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. GILCHREST, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mrs. DRAKE.
H.R. 583: Mr. HILL, Mr. UPTON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. WHITFIELD of Kentucky, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 610: Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 654: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 728: Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. LOESACK, Ms. WATSON, and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 917: Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 989: Mr. PLATTS.
H.R. 1000: Mr. KIND, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. CHANDLER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. SESTAK, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, and Mr. HALL of Texas.
H.R. 1050: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1134: Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. HILL.
H.R. 1147: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 1264: Mr. SALI and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 1279: Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 1306: Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida and Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.
H.R. 1386: Ms. KAPTUR and Mr. BERMAN.
H.R. 1419: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. MICHAUD, and Mr. PLATTS.
H.R. 1474: Mr. SESTAK and Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 1524: Mr. MELANCON.
H.R. 1552: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. ALTMIRE, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 1584: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mrs. BONO MACK, and Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 1609: Mr. GALLEGLY and Mr. SHULER.
H.R. 1610: Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. STUPAK, and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
H.R. 1629: Mr. BOOZMAN.
H.R. 1643: Mr. CHANDLER.
H.R. 1647: Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois.
H.R. 1653: Ms. SUTTON, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, and Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 1791: Mr. SALI.
H.R. 1881: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. MEEK of Florida.
H.R. 1927: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. HOLT, and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico.
H.R. 1992: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 2033: Mr. WU.
H.R. 2046: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 2060: Mr. PORTER.

H.R. 2131: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2160: Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 2164: Mr. HINCHEY.
H.R. 2247: Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 2330: Mr. KUHL of New York.
H.R. 2357: Mr. RYAN of Ohio and Ms. CLARKE.
H.R. 2370: Mr. ROTHMAN and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H.R. 2488: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.
H.R. 2550: Mr. COURTNEY and Mr. KUHL of New York.
H.R. 2677: Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 2686: Mr. MICHAUD, Ms. HARMAN, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. ELLSWORTH.
H.R. 2712: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 2744: Mr. DAVIS of Alabama and Mr. CROWLEY.
H.R. 2762: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas and Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.
H.R. 2802: Mr. PASTOR, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas.
H.R. 2818: Mr. ROSS, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 2892: Mr. STARK.
H.R. 2894: Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia.
H.R. 2914: Mr. ANDREWS.
H.R. 2941: Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 2943: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 3112: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 3177: Mrs. BACHMANN.
H.R. 3229: Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 3404: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H.R. 3636: Mr. SIREs.
H.R. 3664: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 3750: Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia.
H.R. 3819: Mr. MITCHELL and Mr. DEFazio.
H.R. 3934: Mr. MITCHELL and Mr. REGULA.
H.R. 4081: Mr. SMITH of Texas.
H.R. 4102: Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 4105: Mr. GRIJALVA and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
H.R. 4116: Mr. TERRY.
H.R. 4175: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 4206: Mr. ALTMIRE.
H.R. 4236: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 4248: Mr. PASTOR, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. COSTELLO.
H.R. 4312: Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 4318: Mr. BECERRA.
H.R. 4335: Mr. BACA and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 4544: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 4688: Ms. BERKLEY and Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 4690: Mr. WEINER.
H.R. 4836: Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Ms. SOLIS.
H.R. 4930: Mr. TERRY.
H.R. 4934: Ms. BALDWIN.
H.R. 4936: Mr. SHAYS.
H.R. 5057: Mr. WYNN.
H.R. 5124: Mr. ALEXANDER.
H.R. 5173: Mr. NADLER and Mr. WEXLER.
H.R. 5236: Mrs. BONO MACK.
H.R. 5404: Mrs. CAPPs.
H.R. 5443: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. CARNAHAN, and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 5450: Mr. ELLSWORTH and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 5461: Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 5466: Mr. CARDOZA, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. LAMPSON.
H.R. 5467: Mr. MOORE of Kansas.
H.R. 5469: Mr. ALTMIRE.
H.R. 5475: Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.
H.R. 5481: Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 5496: Mr. McNULTY.
H.R. 5540: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 5546: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 5554: Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 5565: Mr. DUNCAN.
H.R. 5591: Mr. CHABOT, Mr. BURGESS, and Mr. WELDON of Florida.
H.R. 5603: Mr. SHULER.
H.R. 5611: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina and Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.
H.R. 5616: Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. AKIN, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. BROWN of Georgia, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. TANCREDI, Mr. POE, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 5641: Mr. BILBRAY.
H.R. 5645: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 5646: Mr. LATTA, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. POE, Mr. CARTER, and Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.
H.R. 5656: Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SHADEGG, and Mr. SULLIVAN.
H.R. 5668: Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
H.R. 5670: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, and Mr. KUHL of New York.
H.R. 5684: Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida and Ms. BERKLEY.
H.J. Res. 12: Mr. PITTS.
H.J. Res. 68: Ms. BALDWIN.
H.J. Res. 79: Ms. WATERS and Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.
H. Con. Res. 75: Ms. BALDWIN.
H. Con. Res. 137: Mr. BOOZMAN.
H. Con. Res. 295: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.
H. Con. Res. 305: Mr. WAMP and Mr. ROSKAM.
H. Con. Res. 315: Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland and Mr. CANNON.
H. Con. Res. 318: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. CHABOT.
H. Res. 76: Mr. SUTTON.
H. Res. 111: Mr. STEARNS.
H. Res. 424: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. HARE, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. EDWARDS, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H. Res. 758: Mr. HOEKSTRA.
H. Res. 820: Mr. GONZALEZ.
H. Res. 937: Mr. PLATTS.
H. Res. 987: Mr. MELANCON.
H. Res. 1011: Mr. AKIN, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. HERGER, Mr. KIRK, and Mr. CARNAHAN.
H. Res. 1020: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. HODES, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. SESTAK, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, Mr. NUNES, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. FILNER, Mr. MILLER of Florida, and Mr. CARNAHAN.
H. Res. 1052: Mr. ALTMIRE.
H. Res. 1058: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.
H. Res. 1063: Mr. KUHL of New York and Mr. BROWN of South Carolina.
H. Res. 1069: Mr. HODES, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Ms. BERKLEY.
H. Res. 1070: Mr. MACK.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the clerk's desk and referred as follows:

221. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County Monmouth, New Jersey, relative to Resolution No. 2008-11 requesting the Congress of the United States and the President of the

United States reverse the decision to close the United States Army Installation at Fort Monmouth and supporting requests for an investigation by the Attorney General; to the Committee on Armed Services.

222. Also, a petition of the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana, relative to Resolution No. R3 calling upon the Congress of the United States to take emergency action to protect homeowners by enacting a Homeowners and Banks Protection Act; to the Committee on Financial Services.

223. Also, a petition of the Board of Supervisors of Essex County, New York, relative to Resolution No. 56 supporting H.R. 3036 and S. 198, the No Child Left Inside Act; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

224. Also, a petition of the City Council of Foster City, California, relative to Resolu-

tion No. 2008-8 requesting the U.S. Postal Service assign zip codes 94404 exclusively to Foster City and to designate Foster City's postal facility as a main post office; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

225. Also, a petition of the Commission of the City of Lauderhill, Florida, relative to Resolution No. 07R-11-311 supporting S. 344 which would require youth athletic coaches to meet level two screening requirements; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

226. Also, a petition of the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, Florida, relative to Resolution No. R-131-08 urging the Congress of the United States and the Florida Legislature to strengthen hate crime laws to provide that intentionally exposing a person to hanging nooses or other objects or symbols evidencing prejudice cre-

ates a presumption of a hate crime, in light of recent events in Jena, Louisiana; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

227. Also, a petition of the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, Florida, relative to Resolution No. R-132-08 urging the Florida Legislature to designate that portion of State Road 934 on N.W. 79th Street between N.W. 7th Avenue and N.W. 37th Avenue as "Rev. Dr. C.P. Preston, Jr. Street"; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

228. Also, a petition of the California State Lands Commission, relative to a letter expressing concerns regarding H.R. 2830, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2007; jointly to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Homeland Security, Energy and Commerce, and the Judiciary.